

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE

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LEONARD HUXLEY



JUNE 1930.

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JUNE 1930.

POLYCHROMATA.

BY J. LESLIE MITCHELL.

XII. THE PASSAGE OF THE DAWN.

I.

WHAT is it? A camel-train with *bersim*, I think. . . . Unpleasant? He smells not sweetly, the camel. . . . You have startled the driver; he thought us *jinni*, perhaps!

That tinkling? You did not notice it as they passed? It requires the distance for effect. To have your heart rise in your throat you must hear it ring across dusk miles of desert—or as Oliver Gault once heard it beyond the fairy mountains of Mesheen.

Sit here in this doorstep and rest, my friend. Young men should dream their loves at night, not wander the streets of Cairo with the middle-aged and prosy Russian! Even though it is your last Egyptian night, and to-morrow await you sea and ship and weeks wherein your Cairene days and I will fade to the merest names—and even those of uncertain orthography!

. . . Very soon the morning now. See that greyness above the roofs? In an hour we will go down past 'Abbas Pasha and stir the little Simon to provide a last Greek breakfast in the Khalig. Meantime—

Eh? Gault? Mesheen? I had forgotten both till that camel went by. In the self-defence I have forgotten. . . . Weeks now since I went out to that desert-house of his—coward and fool that I am!

But I will go again: this very morning I will go! Somehow I will find the courage. . . . Oh, dreamer of dreams, fantastic fool though I am—who knows, who knows—?

. . . Bear with me a little, my friend. A camel's bell—that it should stir one so! Yet perhaps this very night in Abu Zabal another heard it go by—one who may find forgetfulness never, unless—unless—

II.

And for beginnings of all this strange haunting of three lives is to go back across a year and eight hundred miles of desert to the last outpost of the company Trans-Saharan Transport. A stifling night of February, far beyond Kufra, in the regions where the oases ceased and the raiding Tuareg of Air and Tibesti came but seldom. And in his tent, on the edge of the encampment, Oliver Gault, the sick and fevered surveyor, hating his work, his companions, his life.

'Mosquitoes crawling battalions deep on my face, and my stomach rotten with fever. I was at the last stage: I'd have broken down before morning. Next tent that infernal Caprotti was jerking out a tune on a sand-clogged gramophone—the needle seemed to be playing round and round on my brain-tracks. Air thick as soup, and yet cold. . . . And that greasy blaze of stars!'

So to me he was to describe that place, in the uncouth jargon that is the modern English colloquial—the speech-debasement from which is yet smitten the occasional vivid phrase. . . .

The year before that I had known him in Cairo. Slight, quick, restless, with the strange flare of light in pale eyes, the mouth unevenly cut, and a face tanned almost negro-black: Oliver Gault. He was then in negotiation with Trans-Saharan Transport for the post of desert surveyor. This was the new American company, proposing, after the planning of routes and roads, to run the constant caravans of caterpillar automobiles throughout Sahara, linking in trade and travel Cairo to Air, Algiers to Timbuctoo. . . . The project florid and magnificent, and one that had fired the quick imagination of Gault, though he would speak of it in the humour as twisted as his mouth.

'In a year we'll have the Tuareg talking through his nose, dancing to jazz and uplift, and holding Monkeyville trials. . . . Nothing can withstand the progress of nasalisation.'

Young though he was, he had already reputation as Saharan explorer and geologist. With Hassanein Bey he shared credit for first traversement of the stony deserts—though this credit he would claim for himself, and jeer the Bey from the field. . . . Not the gentleman, you understand, either in birth or outlook. But I think the gentleman passes from the world. Up in his place rise the Gaults, cruel and crude, restless of outlook, tenacious of pur-

pose, without honour and without faith—yet stirred by the gleam occasional of a new vision and a new selflessness that no knighthood of the world has ever known. . . .

But that new vision is still but a mirage-picture in the dusk. From Gault that evening he was to describe it was more remote than belief in the articles thirty-nine of your Church. He was the man frantic with fatigue and disgust, his nerves frayed to twisted rags by the months of self-overwork and discomfort and monotony.

'I think I'd have gone mad in a minute—I was reaching for my Webley to go out and settle the hash of either Caprotti or his gramophone when I heard our sentry shouting a challenge, and an angel of God, disguised as a Sudanese and smelling like a cholera epidemic, came clumping into the camp on a camel. All the way from Kufra. He'd brought the mail-bag—three letters. . . . I opened the single personal one, read it, and gave a croak. Like an overcome bull-frog. . . . And then I was laughing and crying, in hysterics, the pages slipping and falling from my heat-rawed hands and being picked up and being lost again. . . .'

The father whom he had hated—the war profitmaker in England whom he had regarded always with the savage contempt, even before the days of the final quarrel, whose life of safety and security his own aching restlessness and bitter no-content had despised—was dead.

'I found myself chanting an insane sing-song—"Saved from hell, saved from hell!" And then I grew calmer. Hell—of my own choosing. Whatever for? *Whatever* for? Why hadn't I stayed in England and wallowed in war-profits? . . . And then I was scrambling for my boots and weeping and singing again. Sand and dirt and discomfort, prickly heat and Baghdad boils and potted meat—finished and done with! The world waiting there in the east—if I didn't die first!—the world where I could laze and laze and laze . . . bathe and bathe and bathe . . . spend and spend and spend . . . live like a lord . . . sleep like a hog . . . go clad in sin and shining raiment . . . drink of life like a fly in a tumbler! . . .

'And women—oh, my God, were there still women with white, white skins, and would any of them be alive when I got back?

'They must have thought me a raving lunatic, the roadmen. In an hour I'd chucked my billet, handed over the road-survey to little Savraut—who did foolish things and tried to stop me with a revolver, not knowing that I was a soul reprieved. Then I grabbed

the camel, some food and water, and was on the way to Kufra before midnight. . . . Reached it in three days. Rode most of them delirious, I think, with an insane conviction that the world in the east was a mirage that I must overtake.

'A mile from the first oasis the camel gave a ping like a clock-work toy with the works gone wonk, and doubled up. I staggered into Kufra just ahead of the sunset.'

III.

Six weeks later, all unconscious of that happening, in the last days of Spring and the season tourist, I was preparing for myself a short holiday. Three weeks on the beach at Mustapha I planned, where none would question me as to whether the good antiques of Frankfort were genuine or your Mr. Wells an incarnation of Akhnaton. . . . I had saved a little money, you understand, and was sick of Cairo, the Mediterranean calling me like a pleasant friend a year neglected.

And then one morning I was handed the letter brought by a messenger over-night. I opened it, recognised the handwriting, and read :

'DEAR SALONEY,

Come and talk to me. I learnt the other night that you were still in Cairo. I myself have been here a month and a half, but I'm going to Alexandria next week—thank God! for I'm very bored.

Any time this afternoon if you can manage it.

OLIVER GAULT.'

I stared at the notepaper in stupefaction. Oliver Gault—whom I had believed to be in the Sahara beyond Siwa—he was in Cairo and staying at Shepherd's Hotel!

I had no commissions to carry out, and no engagements that afternoon. So, in the some curiosity, I dressed myself in tourist drill and sun-helmet, playing the little game that I was the English tripper arrived for the hasty week in Cairo. In the taxi I rode to Shepherd's, speaking to the driver in the loud and inaccurate French, as only an Englishman may speak. At the entrance, where I had the many times waited for custom amongst other dragomans, I handed the card and was shown to the cool lounge to await the coming of Gault.

He was taking the bath, they told me, in the tone respectful,

as was proper to my bad French and the cut of my drill. It was the room deserted and I leant back in my seat and closed my eyes and heard the sound of the little waves come racing up the beach at Mustapha. . . .

'Anton!' In the voice of the amazement, the voice half-choked. 'Oh, Anton Kyrilovich!'

IV.

I opened my eyes at that. As one confronted by a ghost I sat staring, myself white-faced I think, as she was. Then I came to my feet and stood at attention and kissed her hands.

'Princess!'

She looked round the room the swift moment, then flung her arms about my neck and kissed me. Then laughed, and wrung my hands, and for the little we stood breathless. Slowly the colour came back to her face and to her lips the amused smile—amusement at herself and me.

'Anton! I thought you dead or a gay commissar all these years! . . . In Cairo for nine of them? And since we met—oh, I don't want to remember how long!'

'Twelve years,' I said, and tried to smile. We Russians have learnt to smile at much which is unamusing. We sat down and looked at each other, I and she who had been the Princess Pelagueya Bourrin. . . .

Of those far days in Kazan, when I was still Professor of the English Literature in the Gymnasium and—though this you may find hard to believe!—without suspicion that in twelve years' time I would be the middle-aged dragoman sitting on a Cairene doorstep at dawn—of those there is no need for you to know. She was the girl of eighteen then, and I, though the mere professor, had yet the personal dreams, for I came of a family as old and noble as hers—we could still consider that of importance, we whom the soldier-groom Budenni was to sweep from South Russia as so many vermin!

So distant in the years from that quiet room at Shephard's.

She was changed unbelievably—and yet hardly at all!—she whom I had always found strange pleasure in addressing by the formal title. And of this my princess—even now I do not know the colour of her hair and eyes. I think they are both that black that is on occasion the brown: when the sun comes on them. In

unexpected lights and moments the sun comes on the hair and eyes of Pelagueya. . . .

Short-cut hair ; in the absurd, short skirts, the dress of white over-stamped with the whorls of gold ; with still that clear pallor of brow and cheek that is Russian, and the smooth out-jut of cheek-bones, and the long, sweet fall of lips. . . . Unchanged, except that the sunlight in her eyes brought the different picture : Like Spring sun on a Ural river when the ice lies frozen beneath.

'Of course you look older, Anton. But handsome as ever. Oh, Anton Kyrilovich, it's so long since I saw a man blush ! and with a beard—I hardly knew you a moment because of that beard.'

The beard was safe topic. 'All Russians are bearded—outside Russia. Without it I would not have been the refugee authentic, nor the guide interesting.'

Of my profession for nine years I told a little. There came the swift pity and anger in her face.

'A dragoman ! How horrible ! If we had known, we might have helped—at least at first. But they said you were killed at Perekop. Some other Saloney, of course. We escaped to France and lived—I will not tell you how we lived. Then Boris went back to Russia secretly three years ago, and was arrested and shot. That broke father's heart. He died and left hardly a sou— Poor father !

'And then, on that awful strip of coast— Oh, Anton, you escaped much by becoming a dragoman !—I began two years as companion, teacher, nursery-maid. Once I loved children. . . . Amongst nouveaux riches, Brazilians, French bourgeois. . . . Why isn't there a revolution in France ? We at least had pleasant manners !

'And then this January——'

She had looked one night at the pearl necklace she had hoarded, and all the pleasant life forgone—the life of ease and consideration, laughter and gay song and cultured voices—had cried in her ears to take the mad risks. She had gone to Paris, had had the orgy of purchasing pretty clothes. Then south to Marseilles and so a passage to Egypt.

'But why Egypt ?'

'They said the bigger and more brilliant Brazilians came here. I came after them, Anton, to sell myself as advantageously as possible. . . . I'm glad he's not a Brazilian, though.'

She had looked away whilst she was speaking, but now she

turned her head directly towards me again, the little spot of blood flaming below each cheekbone, but with the cool irony still in her eyes.

'I'm glad to have seen you again, just once, Anton. It's been the final and artistic touch. You see, I'm leaving Cairo in a week's time as the mistress of a millionaire.'

'Pelagueya!' And then, at sight of the laughter still in her eyes: 'You are joking.'

The laughter was suddenly gone. 'Joking! Anton, I'd have sold myself to a Jew from the ghetto—if he'd had money. Shameless? You haven't known those last two years—condescension and mean rooms and the life of a servant. The nursery-maid emigrée, the pauper princess! . . . Rather than face that again I'd go back to Russia and turn tovarish. But I'm to do neither. And my millionaire's not a Jew. Of the canaille, of course, but rather amusing. . . . Especially now that he hates me.'

'Hates you?'

She laughed. 'It was comic. He explained that of course he had no romantic love, that I was, in fact, just something he wanted and could afford. Nevertheless, he offered marriage. I told him that the price was too small and that in Russia we Bourrins did not wed with the gutter. . . . How easy to sting the vanity of those animals! He's accepted my counter-proposal, but every moment I think he swears that I'll pay to the uttermost for that acceptance. . . . The bargaining instinct, I suppose. We've had the terms and endurance of the association drawn up by a lawyer!'

She clasped her hands round her knees, the defiance leaping in her eyes. 'Shocked, Anton? But me— Oh, I'm to have the things that haven't been mine for years except as desperate luxuries: money and laziness, leisure; clean food, clean hands, and long, long bathes; books and jewels and pretty clothes. Clothes! The loveliness of clothes, Anton! If I could only take you upstairs and show you the things I've been buying!'

I found my voice strange and high-pitched.

'And the price?'

She suddenly wrung her hands. I thought she was going to weep.

'The price! What cowards you are—men! Liars and cowards and cheats, weak and emotional! Greedy liars, greedy cheats! . . . If I came to share your dragoman's room would I not pay the same price?'

I had nothing to say to that, nor looked at her, the princess who had strayed from a fairy story into the legend of Gomorrah. And then her hand on mine.

'I didn't mean that. Or I did. Oh, Anton, it's too late. If this was 1917 and Kazan and yours wasn't a dragoman's room. . . . All our faiths were futilities, and before I grow old—oh, my friend, I must *live*!'

She withdrew her hand, laughed again a little unsteadily, and sought for her cigarette-case. Then she paused with lighted match, and the amused scorn flickered on her lips.

'The exhibit. Here comes my millionaire.'

I did not look over my shoulder, hearing the footsteps approach. I sat with a grip on myself, trying to believe that all our faiths had not been futilities, our codes cowardice. And then she spoke, in English, in the insolent drawl.

'This is a countryman of mine, Mr. Millionaire. Mr. Oliver Gault: Colonel Anton Saloney.'

V.

I can still hear her gay laugh, the trifle breathless, as she glanced from one to other of us, and learnt that I had come to Shephard's to meet him.

'Then I will leave you,' and, with the smile to me and the nod patronising to Gault, she was gone. I had stood up, but Gault turned a casual back to her nod and looked out through the window. He was clad in the soft and expensive flannels, the clothes well-chosen and seemly, but for one detail. This was a tie of the vivid red, and, still in the dazement of his revelation as Pelagueya's millionaire, I stared at it foolishly.

'Why do you wear that?'

He turned his sun-blackened face and grinned at me, twistedly. 'Oh, to show my kinship with Budenni! . . . Coming upstairs?'

And there, upstairs in the suite gorgeous, I sat and listened to him, with all the time at back of my mind the thought: This is Pelagueya's millionaire. But I made the no interruptions or denunciations heroic. . . . It was the very evil and unkind dream I was dreaming, and through it all I heard forgetfulness and the Mediterranean calling on the beaches of Mustapha.

' . . . And only a month since I rode into Kufra, Saloney. Like a bad nightmare badly remembered. Lord, how the mosquitoes must be mourning my passing!'

'How have you passed this six weeks?' I asked.

He grinned and sprawled in a chair. 'In bed, largely. Clad in silk. Look at these socks. . . . God bless my parental profiteer and his forgiving last testament. . . . A little man comes and shaves me each morning, and another finds my braces, and three bring my boots—one to each boot and one with the laces. They'd fetch a palanquin and carry me down to lunch, if I asked for it.' He yawned suddenly and jumped to his feet and swore.

'And I'm bored, Saloney—oh, fed to the teeth! Dances and outings and chatter and opera—Lord, that opera! I've escaped to heaven from hell—St. Peter himself shook hands with me on arrival: I think it was St. Peter, though it may have been the manager—and the harping and the company celestial bores me. Or is it only Cairo—your Polychromata? I'd rather live in a damn dye-factory. . . .'

He prowled to and fro, restlessly. 'The peasant in the palace, the Zulu in Versailles—the unimpressed Zulu. Is it that, or do we just outgrow these things, along with wigs and patches and gibbets and powder. . . .' He stopped and grinned again, his face the satyr's. 'Anyhow, there's one thing we don't outgrow. Still that.' He stared at me a sudden curiosity. 'Are you in love with this Princess Pelagueya, colonel?'

How the sea was calling out beyond Pharillon!

'Told you of our relations—our prospective relations? She has! . . . And the price? I'll see she pays it. By God, I'll see to that!'

But not even in a dream—I made to rise. 'This is the beastliness.'

He caught my arm. 'Oh, sit down, colonel. Beastliness? Of course I'm a beast—a starved beast, a beast hungry for beauty and tenderness. What else is there to grope after? And I'm to buy it, and in a week. . . . To think I might have been still in Sahara!'

I could not hate him, even in a dream; they are the kind beyond hate, those. He sat down and yawned again, and stretched.

'Sahara . . . the old company. Wonder where they are, little Savraut and Caprotti and Ba Daghsar and the rest? Somewhere north of the Mesheen massif. . . . Pity that infernal détourné was necessary.'

He seemed to await the question. He began to scatter cigarette ash on the gorgeous carpet in the idle illustration.

'Mesheen. A mountain block beyond Kufra. Lies north to south thirty or forty miles. Block in several senses. Terra incognita and absolutely impassable—a wilderness of closed gulleys. Every nullah we tried ended in a cul-de-sac. There's no pass at all through the massif and the road'll have to wheel up north by a long détour to carry on towards Air. We searched for days. . . .'

He dropped his cigarette and absent-mindedly ground it into the floriferous carpet. 'Funny thing happened there. We hadn't a single camel with us, the range seemed uninhabited—couldn't be inhabited. No oases anywhere near at hand. And yet—one night, at the other side of the impassable walls, I heard a camel's bell.'

The ice-flare in his eyes. 'Clear and distinct—and no possible camel-train could be there. Later I heard a yarn amongst the Arabs of the road-gang that a pass through the mountains had once existed. . . . An old chap told me of it—some crazy legend of a *Madhiq el Fiqr*, with guarded entrance, that traversed Mesheen from east to west.'

'*Madhiq el Fiqr*?' I sought in the inadequate English and Arabic vocabularies of my mind for translation. 'The Passage of the Dawn?'

'Eh? . . . That funny Russian twist! Morning Pass I called it. You're the better poet.' There came on his dark face the sudden, strange dreaming look. 'The Corridor of the Morning—the Passage of the Dawn!'

He leapt to his feet, and swore. 'Gods, almost I thought myself back there! Waken up, Saloney. A drink to celebrate my beatification?'

VI.

Next day I went to Alexandria. Behind, in Shepherd's, the Princess Pelagueya Bourrin, descendant of boyars, prepared to consummate her bargain with Oliver Gault.

There was no shame between them, you understand, no embarrassment and no pretence of affection. Rather the reverse. They were each conscious of a bright, sharp enmity. Pelagueya made no concealment of her scorn, nor Gault of the fact that for that scorn she would pay dearly. As he had paid.

'A heavy price, Mr. Millionaire,' she had said, when they came out together from the office of the shocked and amazed little lawyer in the Sharia el Manakh.

'It is worth it,' he had answered, looking at her, the derisive grin for once vanishing from his twisted mouth. And at that look, so far from love, somehow not lust, she had shivered a little.

But there is no courage like to that of their generation—the generation to which the gods are foolishness and the codes and restraints but maunderings of dull dotards. They cry for life without veils or reticences, and face it without veils themselves. In that last week Pelagueya and Gault evolved a strange friendliness—mocking on her part, sardonic on his, though they would meet but seldom, and then as casual acquaintances.

On the Monday they were to go together to Alexandria, where Gault had already bought a house. But on the Saturday he came to her with the proposal that this plan should be altered. There was an old Turkish castle out in Abu Zabal which he had once seen. An acquaintance had told him it was lately renovated, and to let. If the Princess Bourrin was agreeable, they would go there, instead of Alexandria, for the first few weeks.

'But why? We'll be very bored. It's on the edge of the desert, isn't it?'

'That's the chief attraction. I want to get out of a comfortable bed each morning and make faces at the Sahara.'

She laughed at that, for once unguardedly. 'Yes, I think I can make the concession.'

He called for her early on the Monday afternoon, bringing the great touring car. Her luggage was loaded into it, and together they drove out of Cairo. She lighted a cigarette, and sat watching him for a little, then made a request. Could she drive?

'Why not?' he said, and relinquished the seat to her. The car ran through the long afternoon into the Egyptian country. Once he looked at her with the twisted grin.

'Honeymoon.'

Canaille.

It was nearly two hours before he spoke again. 'Five miles now.'

Now they came to a slope where the road zig-zagged ruttily and steeply away beneath them. Little stones pattered on the wind-screen. Out of a field by the side of the road a heavy cart, the single-poled, wooden-wheeled, was being drawn by oxen. Two boys in charge stared up at the nearing car and beat the indifferent beasts. Their shouts came up the evening.

Gault looked at Pelagueya, saw the puckering of her brows,

the tinge of colour mount to each cheekbone. He hesitated only a second.

'Shall I——?'

He leant over, slipped his right arm under her left, put both hands over hers, and grinned at the road. A wisp of her short hair clouded his eyes an irritable moment. He felt her fingers strain under the pressure of his. . . .

It was a difficult moment. The oxen laboured aside, clumsily, up the steep mud-bank sheered the off-side wheels of the car. Then, with a breath-catching swerve, they were on the road again, with the sunset-reddened incline sloping away before them.

It was as if that sunset would never die. In front and behind the road glowed in gold and red. Under the dim clumps of date-palms fled painted shadows. Gault's hands still remained on the wheel, and to Pelagueya it seemed that in a moment she would weep.

Then she heard him speak, jerkily.

'Look here, that contract. . . . You'll be all right, but you needn't—— We'll go back to Cairo.'

They glanced at each other, whitely, queerly, strangers trapped by wonder. The car sped on. Then, the fairy princess, she turned her face to him.

'Do you know you've never kissed me? . . . And it's only three miles to Abu Zabal.'

VII.

They spent two halcyon and amazing months in the old Turkish castle, the while the summer waxed. They talked the sun out of the sky each day and never lost interest in the talking. They had waited all their lives to talk to each other.

'We'll buy a yacht and go drowsing through the Mediterranean. To Greece. To Crete. South through the Red Sea to India—Java—Sumatra. . . . Wander together forever, princess. . . . Was there ever a man so lucky as I am?'

They sat listening that evening to a nightingale that sang in the cypress grove at the end of the garden. And Gault, listening, was aware that his love had already changed from a romantic passion to something akin to a vivid pain.

'When are you going to marry me, Pelagueya? Sometime? Why not now? I'll make Saloney persuade you when he comes to-morrow.'

But on the morrow, when I came to kiss the hand of my lost princess, she would not be persuaded by me either.

'Some time. When we know each other.'

He swore at that. 'Don't you know me by now? Every secret of body and soul?'

She laughed and kissed him, gaily. 'You English boy!'

But that afternoon Gault was restless, and together we tramped into the village, leaving Pelagueya sitting in the shade of the cypress grove. Coming back at sunset we could still see her there. And suddenly he was talking to me with a strange passion.

'Lord, Saloney, what fools we are! Wanting even when we've the world in our hands! Wanting something we cannot name. . . . Pelagueya—God, she's wonder itself, life and love and God to me. And yet—and yet—sometimes I feel I could sell my soul for the gift of an hour's sheer unhappiness! What is it, Saloney, what is it? Marriage—the world's sanction we've forgone and she refuses. . . . Is it that?'

We were within hearing of Pelagueya by then, and she waved to us. He knelt beside her and laid his head in her lap.

'On edge to-day, princess—like a fool! Don't go away, Saloney. I shan't make more love in public than I can help. Sit down and listen for our nightingale.'

That velvet silence of the Egyptian evening closed in on us. Suddenly Gault started and cursed, and moved his head restlessly. Pelagueya put her arms around his neck, silencing him, and we listened.

From far across the tundra it came, on the Cairo road, sweet and remote, a faint music growing clearer and clearer, then fading into the gathering dusk—the tinkling of a camel's bell.

VIII.

Next morning he came into Cairo with me, and it was late in the day before he returned to Pelagueya in Abu Zabal. At the first look at the flame in his eyes she shivered. But he caught her hands, like a man in desperation.

'Pelagueya, will you come into Cairo and marry me to-morrow?'

She shook her head, smiling with trembling lips. He laughed queerly, brought something from his pocket, and tore it into little scraps. Then, looking away from her, he spoke.

'I've been into the offices of Trans-Saharan Transport. They've a caravan leaving Sollum in four days, and I'm going with it—'

paying part of the expenses, on a special expedition. I've been commissioned to make a detailed investigation of the Mesheen massif.'

'I knew,' she said, and smiled at him, weeping.

'You knew? But how? . . . Have you tired of me, then? . . . I'm a fool. Don't cry, princess. . . . What have I done?'

'Tired of you? Oh my dear! . . . Of course you must go. And I'll wait for you, and perhaps—'

He was holding her close, the old ice-flame in his eyes. 'You'll marry me when I come back? Fairy and reward! . . . It's that infernal mountain range that's worried me. Mesheen. I'm to find the pass I know lies through it—the Passage of the Dawn. Little Savraut and Caprotti are to be detached to assist. Be back again inside six months. . . . And then——!'

IX.

Within six months he was dead, killed in a manner very horrible by a raiding band of the Tuareg of Air, he and two others of the special expedition which was exploring the mountain passes of Mesheen.

Pelagueya sent me news of it from the castle at Abu Zabal to which she had returned after the passing of the hot season. I went out to her, and she greeted me with the old, kind smile and the easy talk, till we stood together near that cypress grove. And then, suddenly, she broke down.

'Oh, Anton Kyrilovich! I sent him back there. Did I do right after all? I could have married him; perhaps I could have kept him——'

She wrung her hands, staring across the tundra. 'Only—there was something else. Always—haunting him. And I loved him so. He could never hear a camel's bell go by but he remembered.' She turned to me with groping hands. 'My friend, my friend, what took him back there? What was it that I could not give him, that was not mine to give?'

And then she gripped my hand and stood rigid.

'Oh, listen!'

There are many camel-trains go by Abu Zabal. From far across the tundra, as once before I had heard it, it came, sweet and faint, growing clearer and clearer, then fading till it died remote on the Cairo road.

And suddenly, for the moment vivid, it seemed to me that I

understood that aching restlessness that had driven Gault to his death in Mesheen, that Pelagueya herself had shared when she let him go. As in a vision, I saw again that room at Shepherd's, the dreaming look on a dark, still face——

The Passage of the Dawn! All his life he had sought for it—and who does not share that search? Somewhere, we dream, beyond the twilights of love and hate, ease and unease, there is the morning. Somewhere, beyond the mountain-walls, there is wonder and the morning.

(And this is the last of the Saloney stories.)

AN APOLOGY FOR NOVEL-WRITING.

BY HUGH WALPOLE.

'In the republic of letters, there is no member of such inferior rank, or who is so much disdained by his brethren of the quill, as the humble Novelist: nor is his fate less hard in the world at large, since, among the whole class of writers, perhaps not one can be named of which the votaries are more numerous but less respectable.'

Such are the feeling but ungrammatical sentences written by a young lady as the opening of a preface to her first novel. They appeared in the year 1778 but are, I venture to assert, still in some degree appropriate in this year of 1930.

Not that I intend this little article to be in any respect a lament over the times or a reproach to anyone at all. But one never knows what an article will be before it is finished. One can only cling to honest intentions, and my intentions are simply to ask, as Rosa Dartle might: 'Do tell me. I really want to know. Is it as disgraceful to be a novelist as everyone says it is? And if so, why?'

I should never have thought it to be disgraceful at all had I not read somewhere the other day a lament on the part of Mr. Frank Swinnerton who groaned most touchingly (if rather unconvincingly) about the woes of being a novelist, and then, directly after this, a very delightful protest in the pages of the CORNHILL written by Miss Ida Finlay.

Mr. Swinnerton I long ago learnt not to take seriously. He never means anything that he says. But Miss Finlay I know too little about. She *sounds* serious and she *sounds* very young. Both of these things impress me.

Moreover she pretends that her protest was aroused by some hurried and, I fear, rather casual remarks of my own. So, with *Evelina* (the beautiful new Clarendon Press Edition) in the foreground, Mr. Swinnerton and Miss Finlay on either side of me, a new novel of my own freshly published, I have been driven to the consideration of this awful question—Why in Great Britain to-day are four thousand new novels published annually?—and then, beyond this, Why, as that is so, does Miss Finlay declare that, in effect, the novel-form is to all intents dead, and the prose genius of the nation jumping into biography?

My remark—the remark that brought Miss Finlay so happily into the pages of CORNHILL—was this: ‘The six volumes of *Forsyte Saga* are in the proper succession’—the ‘succession’ that is, of the masterpieces of English fiction.

Now Miss Finlay, before she read my startling sentence, had three things in common, apparently, with all the critics of the younger generation. She had, in the first place, not read the English masterpieces. My sentence led her to do so; it did therefore *some* good, I am happy to realise. Secondly, she dislikes very much the *Forsyte Saga*. Thirdly, she hates anything to be in ‘the succession’ to anything.

Now I am unlike the critics of the younger generation in all these respects. I *have* read the Masterpieces, I admire the *Forsyte Saga*, and I do like things to be in succession. Here I reveal myself as middle-aged, late Victorian, and uninterested in the technique of the novel. The first two of these damnable things may be true enough, but most certainly not the third.

I am intensely interested in the technique of the novel, more deeply interested I expect than any creator ought to be. ‘Why then,’ I can hear Miss Finlay impatiently asking (if indeed she can bother with me any longer), ‘are not your own novels more technically interesting?’ And, at this question, I feel that we are approaching a point of real value, something that stretches far beyond the quality of any individual writer’s merits or defects.

I would say here that I must apologise for the recurrence of the first personal pronoun: I use it, however, deliberately. I want to speak directly from my own personal experience, such as it is.

Well, then, dear Miss Finlay, in the first place, I sympathise with you very deeply. I should dislike intensely to be now in 1930, a young beginning novelist with a deep passionate urge towards novel-writing and, at the same time, a critical sense that the attempt, in any of the older meanings of the word, is absurd.

I have within the last two weeks read three novels: *Evelina*, *Vanity Fair* and *Jude the Obscure*, and, unlike in other respects though they are, they are alike in this—they have a burning fiery sense of creative zest. I have also, because of a certain duty laid upon me, read during the last year a great many new novels by new or almost new writers. And these new novels have been for the most part of the intellectual, or, to use a detestable word, Highbrow kind. And, however unlike one another these novels may have been in most respects, they have been alike in this: their *lack* of creative

fire and zest. Those that have possessed creative zest, in greater or lesser degree, have been, on almost every occasion, 'traditional' in form—for instance the *Whiteoaks* of Miss de la Roche, *The Good Companions* of J. B. Priestley, the *Portrait in a Mirror* of Charles Morgan, *The Galaxy* of Susan Ertz.

I discover then a further thing. That these 'traditional' novels named by me have been almost completely neglected by the Higher Critics of Literature. Mr. Squire indeed reviewed *The Good Companions*, and Mr. Bennett said of *The Galaxy* that he seemed to have read it all before. I can remember no other higher critical review of any one of these books.

The Higher Critics, alas! are not interested; they are scarcely interested in the novel at all. Mr. McCarthy in his excellent weekly articles never notices a novel; Mr. Squire very, very seldom; Mr. Bennett only when it is written by a foreigner or possesses some new and startling technique.

And here let me gather wisdom from Miss Finlay again. She explains the lack of interest, among the Modern and the Wise, in this fashion:

'We have not only poets (old style) masquerading as novelists and short story-writers (new style). We have also novelists (old style) disguised as biographers, and even as historians and writers on technical subjects (new style). No wonder the old-fashioned reader is bewildered at this literary carnival.'

Here I am in absolute agreement with her. No one, watching this same literary carnival, but must assent. Where I, being middle-aged and traditional, disagree with her is in her conclusion.

But, before I reach her conclusion, I want (if she is still listening to me, which I greatly doubt) to ask her these two questions: First, are there any intelligent persons left who care to read a novel that is in any sense traditional? and, second, are there any qualities in the traditional novel that are worthy of continuance?

Now, with regard to the audience for the modern traditional novel, does it exist, and is there to-day any novelist who has both a large audience and at the same time critical attention?

The passing of that famous and heroic triumvirate, Mr. Wells, Mr. Bennett, and Mr. Galsworthy, make this a moment when this question is really urgent. For, with their passing, names of writers who are both popular *and* critically considered are hard to find. Miss Rose Macaulay's is at the moment the only one that occurs

to me. Mr. Aldous Huxley, Miss Virginia Woolf, Mr. E. M. Forster, Miss Stella Benson, receive all the fine critical attention that they can possibly desire, but the large wide reading public (and I do not here mean the illiterate, uncritical public) is strangely unaware of their names. Only to-day I was talking to an intelligent well-read gentleman who reads novels and enjoys them, and he had never heard of Mr. Forster, and a month or two ago I encountered a member of the last Government's Cabinet, famous for charming articles on the necessity of the preservation of England, and he had never heard of Mr. Tomlinson!

On the other hand, if I step into Bloomsbury and emphasise the beauties of, say, the novels of Mr. Francis Brett Young, books as moving and poetic as the *Portrait of Clare* and *Black Diamond*, I am met with a kindly but superior indifference.

And here, I think, I touch the heart of Miss Finlay's argument, namely that to the more modern and intellectual artists the traditional novel is completely and irrevocably dead.

No manifestation of it, however well written, however ably it may appear to acquire the colours and language of the modern age, can interest them. As she says: 'The "traditional" novel has been done, consummately and inimitably, by the great Victorians. It belongs to them.'

Her conclusion is convincing—there is nothing more to be said—if, and I feel this to be the real basis of the argument, there are no intelligent readers who want the 'traditional' form of the novel any longer; and, secondly, if the 'traditional' form has nothing in it that is worthy of its continuance.

What are the principal qualities of the 'traditional' form? Miss Finlay herself states them.

She says: 'The traditional novelist, I perceived is (1) and foremost a narrator: (2) His attitude towards life and his fellow-beings is social: (3) His novels are flavoured with wholesome English sentiment.'

I note that Miss Finlay is scornful of all these three attributes.

Now it is true enough that these three impulses are almost entirely lacking in the modern intellectual novel. There is little narrative gift, no social attitude, and, most certainly, no wholesome English sentiment.

I do not say that they are the worse for lacking these things; two of the leaders of the new novel, Miss Virginia Woolf and Mr. E. M. Forster (my own two favourites among all living English

novelists) have all three of these. But, in the main, as Miss Finlay says, the difference between the 'traditional' novel and the modern novel is exactly in the possession and lack of these qualities.

Therefore, Miss Finlay concludes, lacking these, the Novel, as a distinct art-form, is no longer alive, and the genius of the new generation will be directed into other forms—into the biography, the poem and the philosophy.

Well and good. The only question then that remains is as to whether the qualities of narrative, of social record, of English sentiment are worth preserving. Does anyone care whether they are preserved or no?

Apparently some readers do care. The recent success of 'traditional' novels like *The Good Companions*, *Whiteoaks*, *The Portrait of Clare*, prove that there is an audience hungry and eager for all three. But possibly this audience is unintelligent and uneducated? Apparently not so, if one may judge by the readers of these books personally known to all of us.

Take the art of narrative alone. Why is it that one brilliant modern novel after another entirely lacks the power of narrative, so that, although every separate page is exciting, there is no driving impulse to force one eagerly on, to discover 'what will happen next'? Is the impulse to know 'what will happen next' a mean or intellectual one? I do not think so. In it lies half the power of the *Odyssey*, *War and Peace*, *Madame Bovary*, *The Old Wives' Tale*. Why is it too that this fear of the social sense and wholesome sentiment drives novelist after novelist of the modern school to choose themes so small and insignificant that they can only be discerned with the aid of a microscope? The use of the small microscopic theme is, in fact, a cowardly playing for safety. How much safer one is if one chooses as theme the fit of a dress, the drinking of a cocktail, the half-murmured echoes of an almost forgotten quarrel! Here there is no danger of sentiment, here no risk of melodrama, and every opportunity for the display of one's subtlety!

When a genius chooses the colour and evanescence of Mrs. Dalloway's summer day to express the tragedy and drama of life there is no littleness of theme, but it needs a genius to do it!

Dear Miss Finlay, it is only because I feel that, in writing as you do, you are influencing the new writers, the new readers, the new critics, against some of the most delightful possibilities of the novel, that I have asked for your attention.

I am myself, of course, a prejudiced mortal. I tell my own stories very much I fear as I used, thirty-five years ago, to tell them in my school dormitory, and that impulse is possibly too naïf and simple even to be stated, but in the novelists' world there is room for every kind of art—and, I would like to be daring enough to add, every kind of fun; do not conclude, Miss Finlay, too readily, that all the older figures are lying, like Thackeray's box of puppets, neglected in a dusty lumber-room. I can see Becky Sharp's very lively green eyes fixed upon you, in malicious amusement, at this very moment!

I know that you will not charge me with implying that because a novel has a large audience it is important; or that, yet more foolishly, because a novel has a small audience it is important!

No, but here is the position. Once upon a time the novels that were most interesting to critics also attracted immense audiences—*Tom Jones*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Illusions Perdues*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. To-day the novels that engage the attention of the Higher Critics are read, in the main, only by select and special audiences. There for you are the signs of the death of the novel. Are you not possibly taking the novel too seriously? Can it ever be, was it ever intended to be, entirely an Art? Are not the greatest novels truly, as Mr. Bennett once said of them, 'a little amateur'? *Must* the new novel be so superior, so chill in its feelings, so trivial in its motive?

Yes, it is just here that you toss it out of the window as an outmoded form, but I, more optimistic, believe that, if only you and your generation will permit it to be so, we shall see once again the clever subtleties of the newer novel joining forces with the creative zest, interest in social character, narrative power of the older!

'I pray you,' says Mr. Snag in *A New Way for Old Wives*, 'lift your boot and kick heartily. A sneeze is insufficient.' It is the 'kick' in the traditional novel that the new one sadly needs.

INTERLUDE WITH A TUTELARY SPIRIT.

BY JULIAN S. HUXLEY.

MPWAPWA is a pleasant place on the edge of the hills in the Central Province of Tanganyika. Stanley, on his way to find Livingstone, camped under a spreading, heavy-foliaged tree in the village. The Germans had one of their fortified administrative posts here (now replaced by a British District Officer's friendly-looking little office); the road is still there which they made and planted with vegetable barbed wire in the shape of formidably spiked sisal, and on a hill a few miles off is one of their heliograph towers. Here too they plumped down their main veterinary station; the English have taken over the laboratory, and are now moving the headquarters of the whole veterinary department here from the capital, over two hundred miles away. Here the present administration has also built their lymph laboratory, where a quarter of a million vaccination doses are kept in reserve, and whence the whole territory, three times the size of the United Kingdom, is supplied with vaccine for the campaign against smallpox. And they have started a big educational venture at Mpwapwa. Not only is there a local elementary school and a central school where boarders come from all the Central Province, but it is the only Government centre in the territory for the training of native teachers. And besides the fields and steadings of the local tribe, there is also a big native village where was once an important station on a main slave-trade route. Slaves from all parts of the territory and from far-off Congoland beyond the Great Lake got left here for one cause or another, so that it is a much-mixed little African cosmopolis, with Indian shops to boot. The main Tanganyika railway passes only twelve miles away, close under the mountains that bound the opposite side of the narrow plain, and a good motor road runs from the railway to the town. There are two excellent tennis courts, and the rudiment of a golf course. Mpwapwa is thus a busy modern place, as much exposed to the disturbing swirl of civilisation's current as any of the smaller townships of Africa.

In the morning I saw over the veterinary laboratory, where

vast quantities of anti-rinderpest serum are made and bottled (it looks very much like rather turbid beer) for shipment far and wide, and where the unpleasant trypanosomes are studied that wriggle their way through the blood of cattle and keep cows and horses out of the half of tropical Africa. In the afternoon I had a long conference with the staff of the school over the teaching of science to the African schoolboy and future schoolmaster, and about five, as the sun was softening downwards to the west, the headmaster and I, putting on the regular outdoor kit of shorts and open-collared shirt, went for a walk.

We headed for a little rock pinnacle that rises just beyond where the cultivated plain gives place to the hills and their mantle of scrubby woodland. It was a fine little fifty-foot needle of hard rock, and my climbing instincts were aroused. I found my way to its base through the tangled, thorny copsewood, noticing vaguely that the way was roughly barred by a small tree and a branch or two that had been cut and put in the obvious approach between two big boulders. The little climb was easier than it looked, and I was quickly on top, looking over the brown plain and purple hills, parched and waiting for the short rains. Suddenly a loud and peculiar hoarse hissing broke out from just below where I was sitting. I thought of giant wasps or tropical hornets—not without some alarm, for descent in a cloud of stings would have been not only unpleasant but dangerous. But my anxious eye fell not on a swarm of insects but on a solitary reptile—a huge monitor lizard, about four feet long, in a crevice of the rock: I had stepped right over the place without noticing its inmate.

There it was, its scales like tiles upon its trunk, and rising up on its neck into bosses like heavy leatherwork. It looked up at me with a cold malignant eye, darted its flickering tongue, leaden and forked, out of its hard mouth, and hissed with raucous intensity.

This was the first big lizard I had seen wild, and I became seized with an intense desire to catch it. Having decided that its bite might be dangerous, I made a running noose with my garter and prepared to lasso the beast. But on this he turned, and slowly began to creep into a crack. I seized his tail, and there was a struggle, pull devil, pull baker. Once in a crack, he wedged himself with extraordinary firmness, and it was only after two or three minutes that I got him out.

This was no ordinary monitor. The average specimen, so I am assured by those who know his habits, would have been round

and away in a flash. He would have protected himself by vicious and swift snapping, and would have lashed with his tail so intensely that I should never have been able to get him out, or hold him, ignominiously dangling, when I had done so. Doubtless he was an aged creature, who had lived in this rock fortress for decades, scores of years, even a century—we know little of reptilian spans of life. His near fore-paw was badly scarred, with several of the clawed toes bitten off.

Then came the problem of descent; unencumbered I had found the ascent easy, but to get down with only one hand for climbing, while trying to prevent that ugly head from coming within snapping distance of my person, and those powerful fore-quarters from wedging themselves in a crevice, was another matter. However, I succeeded: if ever (which is unlikely) I become a candidate for admission to the Alpine Club, I shall record that brief but anxious descent.

My companion came up to inspect my capture. He too noticed the barring of the approach to the rock, and suggested that the place was a holy place, and the beast a holy beast. So we let it go, but not until after an interesting demonstration of the ease with which reptiles can be hypnotised, or put into the catalepsy which is the evolutionary forerunner of the true hypnotic state. While we were talking, the beast was struggling to make off; to put him at a disadvantage I twisted his tail to turn him over on to his back. At once his movements ceased, and I found I could release my hold, and he still lay there, breathing deeply. Put over on to his belly again, he at once woke up; but if rapidly twisted into the supine position and held still there for a few seconds, he at once became immobilised. Doubtless Aaron's rod had been tricked into the same physiological state, and I recalled playing the same game with the amusingly ugly Horned Toad lizards of the western United States, much to the astonishment of some Wyoming cowboys, whose exclamations of 'Gee!' and 'Wal, I swan!' were redoubled as I succeeded in piling three of the lizards into a grotesque edifice of catalepsy-struck reptilian flesh.

Just down across a patch of cultivation was a little *tembe*, one of the steadings in which the local people, the Wagogo, live. They are square, with buildings all round (or on three sides with a thorn hedge on the fourth). The cattle are driven in at evening into the central space, and the gate barricaded. In the buildings lives a whole patriarchal family—the grandfather with his wife

or wives, the sons with their wives and children; and there are compartments too for the chickens and the goats.

The patriarch of this *tembe* was a little man in the forties or fifties, with a curiously tartar face, low and broad, with highish cheekbones, and a little stringy moustache hanging Chinese fashion round the corners of his mouth. He was a nice little fellow, with humour in every wrinkle of his face, and quick gesticulations of his hands. He was dressed in a low red fez, an old brown golf sweater, and a little cloth kilt. One of his daughters-in-law sat wrapped in a cotton dress, the other, a fine figure of a girl, naked to the waist, with a necklace of English beads, busied herself about the place. As the little man talked, I was reminded of the Italian peasant life I had got to know near Padua during the War. These people were black and pagan; their life was more primitive, their belongings fewer and cruder, their outlook more limited. But there was the same simplicity, the same feeling of a human stock rooted in the soil. There was the same acceptance of life, its drudgeries, pleasures and vicissitudes, that I had learnt to know there, an acceptance for the most part contented, sometimes tinged with humorous resignation.

He showed us his room—wattle and daub, mud floors, no windows, but clean. There were two beds, with skin mattresses, a nicely carved stool; a stone worn smooth by the grinding of interminable maize, with a skin mat on which the women could kneel while they ground it; a big board for playing *bau*, the African game which is played over half the great continent; he played *bau* with his sons in the evenings, he told us, after the work of the day was done.

My companion, after a little general talk, threw out a feeler about the monitor. 'By the way,' he said, 'when we were up at that pinnacle over there, we saw a great lizard among the rocks.'

'Ah yes,' said the little Wagogo man. 'Yes, there is a big lizard up there. He looks after all of us in the neighbourhood. We get pretty good crops, thanks to him.' And he speedily changed the subject.

Afterwards I made some enquiries. It seems certain that monitor lizards are rare in the district; and that this particular specimen was of great age. The rocks were striking to look at, and there was nothing else like them for some miles round. They might well have been chosen as phallic symbols; anyhow, it appears that striking rocks are not infrequently chosen as places

where certain of the initiation ceremonies are gone through. And certainly the obvious approach to the base of the rock had been deliberately barred.

There seems no doubt that it was a sacred place, and the monitor a sacred beast, a tutelary creature to which some divinity attached. I wonder if he is accorded offerings of food. In any case, I hope that his forcible capture and dethronement to the base of the rock will have no evil effects. I left him vainly trying to get the hinder half of his body into a too-narrow crack. May he by now have found his way back to his tabernacle at the summit, there to live long years more. May the people of the neighbourhood not fail in their belief in him so long as he lives. May our rule in the territory not cause a collapse of all their simple living, but cause it to evolve into a richer and more stable peasant life.

We went on homeward in the gathering dusk. Across from the next mountain, a couple of miles away, came the rhythm of drums, inviting to foot it, with accompaniment of shrill whistles and occasional bursts of singing. So home, to dine, and play bridge until it was time to catch the night train up country. . . . A varied day. My companion's only regret is that he had no camera to snap me silhouetted against the sky, with the ancient beast dangling in indignity from my hand, on the summit of the sacred rock.

THE BUICK SALOON.

BY MARY O'MALLEY.

To Mrs. James St. George Bernard Bowlby it seemed almost providential that she should recover from the series of illnesses which had perforce kept her in England, at the precise moment when Bowlby was promoted from being No. 2 to being No. 1 in the Grand Oriental Bank in Peking. Her improved health and his improved circumstances made it obvious that now at last she should join him, and she wrote to suggest it. Bowlby of course agreed, and out she came. He went down to meet her in Shanghai, but business having called him further still, to Hong-kong, Mrs. Bowlby proceeded to Peking alone, and took up her quarters in the big ugly grey-brick house over the Bank in Legation Street. She tried, as many managers' wives had tried before her, to do her best with the solid mahogany and green leather furniture provided by the Bank, wondering the while how Bowlby, so dependent always on the feminine touch on his life and surroundings, had endured the lesser solidities of the sub-manager's house alone for so long. She bought silks and black-wood and scroll-paintings. She also bought a car. 'You'll need a car, and you'd better have a saloon, because of the dust,' Bowlby had said.

People who come to Peking without motors of their own seldom buy new ones. There are always second-hand cars going, from many sources: the leavings of transferred diplomatists, the jetsam of financial ventures, the sediment of conferences. So one morning Mrs. Bowlby went down with Thompson, the new No. 2 in the Bank, to Maxon's garage in the Nan Shih Tzu to choose her car. After much conversation with the Canadian manager they pitched on a Buick saloon. It was a Buick of the type which is practically standard in the Far East, and had been entirely repainted outside, a respectable dark blue; the inside had been newly done up in a pleasant soft grey which appealed to Mrs. Bowlby. The Manager was loud in its praises. The suspension was excellent ('You want that on these roads, Mrs. Bowlby')—the driver and his colleague sat outside ('Much better, Mr. Thompson. If these fellows have been eating garlic—they shouldn't, but they do—').

Thompson knew they did, and agreed heartily. Mrs. Bowlby, new to such transactions, wanted to know whom the car had belonged to. The manager was firmly vague. This was not a commission sale—he had bought the car when the owners left. Very good people—‘from the Quarter.’ This fully satisfied Thompson, who knew that only Europeans live (above the rose, anyhow) in the Legation Quarter of Peking.

So the Buick saloon was bought. Thompson, having heard at the Club that the late Grand Oriental chauffeur drank petrol, did not re-engage him with the rest of the servants according to custom, but secured instead for Mrs. Bowlby the chauffeur of a departing manager of the Banque Franco-Belge. By the time Bowlby returned from Hong-kong the chauffeur and his colleague had been fitted out with khaki livery for winter, with white for summer—in either case with trim gold cuff- and hat-bands—and Mrs. Bowlby, in her blue saloon, had settled down to pay her calls.

In Peking the new-comer calls first; a curious and discouraging system. It is an ordeal even to the hardened. Mrs. Bowlby was not hardened; she was a small, shy, frail woman, who wore grey by preference, and looked grey—eyes, hair and skin. She had no idea of asserting herself; if she had things in her—subtleties, delicacies—she did not wear them outside; she did not impose herself. She hated the calls. But as she was also extremely conscientious, day after day, trying to fortify herself by the sight of the two khaki-and-gold figures in front of her, exhaling their possible garlic to the outer air beyond the glass partition, she called. She called on the diplomats’ wives in the Quarter; she called on ‘the Salt’ (officials of the Salt Gabelle); she called on the Customs—English, Italian, American, and French; she called on the Posts—French, Italian, American, and English. The annual displacement of pasteboard in Peking must amount to many tons, and in this useful work Mrs. Bowlby, alone in the grey interior of her car, faithfully took her share. She carried with her a little list on which, with the help of her Number One boy (as much a permanent fixture in the Bank house, almost, as the doors and windows) she had written out the styles, titles, and addresses of the ladies she wished to visit. The late chauffeur of the Banque Franco-Belge spoke excellent French; so did Mrs. Bowlby—it was one of her few accomplishments; but as no Chinese can or will master European names, the European needs must

learn and use the peculiar versions current among them. '*Ta Ch'in ch'ai T'ai-t'ai, Turkwo-fu*' read out Mrs. Bowlby when she wished to call on the wife of the German Minister. 'Oui, Madame!' said Shwang. '*Pé T'ai-t'ai, Kung Hsien Hut'ung*' read out Mrs. Bowlby, when visiting Mrs. Bray, the Doctor's wife; but when she wished to call on Mrs. Bennett, the wife of the Commandant of the English Guard, and Mrs. Baines, the Chaplain's wife, she found that they were both *Pé T'ai-t'ai* too—which led to confusion.

It began towards the end of the first week. Possibly it was her absorption in the lists and the Chinese names that prevented her from noticing it sooner, but at the end of that week Mrs. Bowlby would have sworn that she heard French spoken beside her as she drove about. Once, a little later, as she was driving down the Rue Marco Polo to fetch her husband from the Club, a voice said, 'C'est lui!' in an underbreath, eagerly—or so she thought. The windows were lowered, and Mrs. Bowlby put it down to the servants in front. But it persisted. More than once she thought she heard a soft sigh. 'Nerves!' thought Mrs. Bowlby—her nerves were always a menace to her, and Peking, she knew, was bad for them.

She went on saying 'Nerves' for two or three more days; then, one afternoon, she changed her mind. She was driving along the Ta Chiang an Chieh, the great thoroughfare running east and west outside the Legation Quarter, where the trams ring and clang past the scarlet walls and golden roofs of the Forbidden City, and long lines of camels, coming in with coal from the country as they have come for centuries, cross the road between the Dodges and Daimlers of the new China. It was a soft brilliant afternoon in April, and the cinder track along the Glacis of the Quarter was thronged with riders; polo had begun, and as the car neared Hatamen Street she caught a glimpse of the white and scarlet figures through the drifting dust on her right. At the corner of the Hatamen the car stopped; a string of camels was passing up to the great gateway, and she had to wait. She sat back in the car, glad of the pause; she was unusually moved by the loveliness of the day, by the beauty and strangeness of the scene, by the whole magic of spring in Peking. She was going later to watch the polo, a terrifying game; she wished Jim didn't play. Suddenly, across her idle thoughts, a voice beside her spoke clearly. 'Au revoir!' it said, 'mon très-cher. Ne tombe pas, je t'en prie.' And as the car moved forward behind the last of the camels, soft

and unmistakable there came a sigh, and the words 'Ce polo! Quel sport affreux! Dieu, que je le déteste!' in a passionate undertone.

'That *wasn't* the chauffeur!' was what Mrs. Bowlby found herself saying. The front windows were up. And besides, that low, rather husky voice, the cultivated and clear accent, could not be confounded for a moment with Shwang's guttural French. And besides, what chauffeur would talk like that? The thing was ridiculous. 'And it *wasn't* nerves, this time,' said Mrs. Bowlby, her thoughts running this way and that round the phenomenon. 'She did say it.' 'Then it was she who said, "C'est lui!" before——' she said almost triumphantly, a moment later.

Curiously, though she was puzzled and startled, she realised presently that she was not in the least frightened. That someone with a beautiful voice should speak French in her car was absurd and impossible, but it wasn't alarming. In her timid way Mrs. Bowlby rather prided herself on her common sense, and as she shopped and called she considered this extraordinary occurrence from all the common-sense points of view that she could think of, but it remained a baffling and obstinate fact. Before her drive was over she found herself wishing simply to hear the voice again. It was ridiculous, but she did. And she had her wish. As the car turned into Legation Street an hour later she saw that it was too late to go to the polo; the last chukka was over, and the players were leaving the ground, over which dust still hung in the low brilliant light, in cars and rickshas. As she passed the gate the voice spoke again—almost in front of her, this time, as though the speaker were leaning forward to the window. 'Le voilà!' it said—and then, quite loudly, 'Jacques!' Mrs. Bowlby almost leaned out of the window herself, to look for whoever was being summoned—as she sat back, conscious of her folly, she heard again beside her, quite low, 'Il ne m'a pas vue.'

There was no mistake about it. It was broad daylight; there she was in her car, bowling along Legation Street—past the Belgian Bank, past the German Legation; rickshas skimming in front of her, Madame de Réan bowing to her. And just as clear and certain as all these things had been this woman's voice, calling to 'Jacques,' whoever he was—terrified lest he should fall at polo, hating the game for his sake. What a lovely voice it was! Who was she, Mrs. Bowlby wondered, and what and who was Jacques? 'Mon très-cher!' she had called him—a delicious expression. It belonged

to the day and the place—it was near to her own mood as she had sat at the corner of the Hatamen and noticed the spring, and hated the polo too for Jim's sake. She would have liked to call Jim 'mon très-cher,' only he would have been so surprised.

The thought of Bowlby brought her up with a round turn. What would he say to this affair? Instantly, though she prolonged the discussion with herself for form's sake, she knew that she was not going to tell him. Not yet, anyhow. Bowlby had not been very satisfied with her choice of a car as it was—he said it was too big and too expensive to run. Besides, there was the question of her nerves. If he failed to hear the voice too she would be in a terribly difficult position. But there was more to it than that. She had a faint sense that she had been eavesdropping, however involuntarily. She had no right to give away even a voice which said 'mon très-cher' in that tone.

This feeling grew upon her in the days that followed. The voice that haunted the Buick became of almost daily occurrence, furnishing a curious secret background to her social routine of calls and 'At Homes.' It spoke always in French, always to or about 'Jacques'—a person, whoever he was, greatly loved. Sometimes it was clear to Mrs. Bowlby that she was hearing only half of a conversation between the two, as one does at the telephone. The man's voice she never heard, but, as at the telephone, she could often guess at what he said. Much of the speech was trivial enough; arrangements for meetings at lunches, at the Polo; for week-end parties at Pao-ma-chang in the temple of this person or that. This was more eerie than anything else to Mrs. Bowlby—the hearing of plans concerned with people she knew. 'Alors, dimanche prochain, chez les Milne.' Meeting 'les Milne' soon after, she would stare at them uneasily, as though by looking long enough she might find about them some trace of the presence which was more familiar to her than their own. Her voice was making ghosts of the living. But whether plans, or snatches of talk about people or ponies, there came always, sooner or later, the undernote of tenderness, now hesitant, now frank—the close concern, the monopolising happiness of a woman in love.

It puzzled Mrs. Bowlby that the car should only register, as it were, the woman's voice. But then the whole affair bristled with puzzles. Why did Bowlby hear nothing? For he did not—she would have realised her worst fears if she *had* told him. She remembered always the first time that the voice spoke when

he was with her. They were going to a *Thé Dansant* at the Peking Hotel, a farewell party for some Minister. As the car swung out of the Jade Canal Road, past the policemen who stand with fixed bayonets at the edge of the *Glacis*, the voice began suddenly, as it so often did, in French—'Then I leave thee now—thou wilt send back the car?' And as they lurched across the tramlines towards the huge European building and pulled up, it went on 'But to-night, one will dance, *n'est-ce pas?*'

'Goodness, what a crowd!' said Bowlby. 'This is going to be simply awful. Don't let's stay long. Will half an hour be enough, do you think?'

Mrs. Bowlby stared at him without answering. Was it possible? She nearly gave herself away in the shock of her astonishment. 'What's the matter?' said Bowlby. 'What are you looking at?'

Bowlby had not heard a word!

She noticed other things. There were certain places where the voice 'came through,' so to speak, more clearly and regularly than elsewhere. Intermittent fragments, sometimes unintelligible, occurred anywhere. But she came to know where to expect to hear most. Near the polo ground, for instance, which she hardly ever passed without hearing some expression of anxiety or pride. She often went to the polo, for Jim was a keen and brilliant player; but it was a horror to her while he played, and this feeling was a sort of link, it seemed to her, between her and her unseen companion. More and more, too, she heard it near the *Hatamen* and in the *hu-t'ungs* or alleys to the east of it. Mrs. Bowlby liked the East City. It lies rather in a backwater, between the crowded noisy thoroughfare of *Hatamen Street*, with its trams, dust, cars and camels, and the silent angle of the Tartar Wall, rising above the low one-story houses. A good many Europeans live there, and she was always glad when a call took her that way, through the narrow *hu-t'ungs* where the car lurched over heaps of rubbish or skidded in the deep dust, and rickshas pulled aside into gateways to let her pass. Many of these lanes end vaguely in big open spaces, where pigs root among the refuse and little boys wander about, singing long monotonous songs with a curious jerky rhythm in their high nasal voices. Sometimes, as she waited before a scarlet door, a flute-player out of sight would begin to play, and the thin sweet melody filled the sunny air between the blank grey walls. Flowering trees showed here and there above them; copper-smiths plied their trade on the steps of carved marble gateways;

dogs and beggars sunned themselves under the white and scarlet walls of temple courtyards. Here, more than anywhere else, the voice spoke clearly, freely, continuously, the rapid rounded French syllables falling on the air from nowhere, now high, light, and merry, with teasing words and inflection, now sinking into low murmurs of rapturous happiness. At such times Mrs. Bowlby sat wholly absorbed in listening, drawn by the lovely voice into a life not her own and held fascinated by the spell of this passionate adventure. Happy as she was with Bowlby, her life with him had never known anything like this. He had never wanted, and she had never dared to use, the endearments lavished by the late owner of the Buick saloon on her Jacques.

She heard enough to follow the course of the affair pretty closely. They met where they could in public, but somewhere in the Chinese City there was clearly a meeting-place of their own—'notre petite asile.' And gradually this haven began to take shape in Mrs. Bowlby's mind. Joyous references were made to various features of it. To-morrow they would drink tea on the stone table under 'our great white pine.' There was the fish-pond shaped like a shamrock where one of the goldfish died—'pourtant en Irlande cela porte bonheur, le trèfle, n'est-ce pas?' The parapet of this pond broke away and had to be repaired, and 'Jacques' made some sort of inscription in the damp mortar, for the voice thrilled softly one day as it murmured, 'Maintenant il se lit là pour toujours, ton amour!' And all through that enchanted spring, first the lilac bushes perfumed the hours spent beneath the pine, and then the acacias that stood in a square round the shamrock pond. Still more that life and hers seemed to Mrs. Bowlby strangely mingled; her own lilacs bloomed and scented the courtyard behind the grey Bank building, and one day as they drove to lunch in the British Legation she drew Jim's attention to the scent of the acacias, which drowned the whole compound in perfume. But Bowlby said, with a sort of shiver, that he hated the smell; and he swore at the chauffeur in French, which he spoke even better than his wife.

The desire grew on Mrs. Bowlby to know more of her pair, who and what they were and how their story ended. But it seemed wholly impossible to find out. Her reticences made her quite unequal to setting anyone on to question the people at the garage again. And then one day, accidentally, the clue was given her. She had been calling at one of the houses in the French Legation;

the two house servants, in blue and silver gowns, stood respectfully on the steps; her footman held open the door of the car for her. As she seated herself the voice said in a clear tone of command, 'Deux cent trente, Por Hua Shan Hut'ung!' Acting on an impulse which surprised her, Mrs. Bowlby repeated the order—'Deux cent trente, Por Hua Shan Hut'ung,' she said. Shwang's colleague bowed and shut the door. But she caught sight, as she spoke, of the faces of the two servants on the steps. Was it imagination? Surely not. She would have sworn that a flicker of some emotion—surprise, and recollection—had appeared for a moment on their sealed and impassive countenances. In Peking the servants in Legation houses are commonly handed on from employer to employer, like the furniture, and the fact struck on her with sudden conviction—they had heard those words before!

Her heart rose with excitement as the car swung out of the compound into Legation Street. Where was it going? She had no idea where the Por Hua Shan Hut'ung was. Was she about to get a stage nearer to the solution of the mystery at last? At the Hatamen the Buick turned south along the Glacis. So far so good. They left the Hatamen, bumped into the Suchow Hut'ung, followed on down the Tung Tsung Pu Hut'ung, right into the heart of the East City. Her breath came fast. It must be right. Now they were skirting the edge of one of the rubbish-strewn open spaces, and the East Wall rose close ahead of them. They turned left, parallel with it; turned right again towards it; stopped. Shwang beckoned to a pancake-seller who was rolling out his wares in a doorway, and a colloquy in Chinese ensued. They went on, slowly, then, down a lane between high walls which ended at the Wall's very foot, and pulled up some hundred yards short of it before a high scarlet door, whose rows of golden knobs in fives betokened the former dwelling of some Chinese of rank.

It was only when Liu came to open the door and held out his cotton-gloved hand for her cards that Mrs. Bowlby realised that she had no idea what she was going to do. She could not call on a voice! She summoned Shwang; Liu's French was not his strong point. 'Ask,' she said to Shwang, 'who lives here—the T'ai-t'ai's name.' Shwang rang the bell. There was a long pause. Shwang rang again. There came a sound of shuffling feet inside; creaking on its hinges the door opened, and the head of an old Chinaman, thinly bearded and topped with a little black cap, appeared in the crack. A conversation followed, and then Shwang

returned to the car. 'The house is empty,' he said. 'Ask him who lived there last,' said Mrs. Bowlby. Another and longer conversation followed, but at last Shwang came to the window with the information that a foreign T'ai-t'ai, 'Fa-kwa T'ai-t'ai' (French lady) he thought, had lived there, but she had gone away. With that Mrs. Bowlby had to be content. It was something. It might be much. The car had moved on towards the Wall, seeking a place to turn, when an idea struck her. Telling Shwang to wait, she got out, and glanced along the foot of the Wall in both directions. Yes! Some two hundred yards from where she stood one of those huge ramps, used in former times to ride or drive up on to the summit of the Wall, descended into the dusty strip of waste land at its foot. She hurried towards it, nervously, picking her way between the rough fallen lumps of stone and heaps of rubbish; she was afraid that the servants would regard her action as strange, and that when she reached the foot of the ramp she might not be able to get up it. Since Boxer times the top of the Tartar Wall is forbidden as a promenade, save for a short strip just above the Legation Quarter, and the ramps are stoutly closed at the foot, theoretically. But in China theory and practice do not always correspond, Mrs. Bowlby knew; and as she hurried, she hoped.

Her hope was justified. Though a solid wooden barrier closed the foot of the ramp, a few feet higher up a little bolt-hole, large enough to admit a goat or a small man, had been picked away in the masonry of the parapet. Mrs. Bowlby scrambled through and found herself on the cobbled slope of the ramp; panting a little, she walked up it on to the Wall. The great flagged top, broad enough for two motor-lorries to drive abreast, stretched away to left and right; a thick undergrowth of thorny bushes had sprung up between the flags, and through them wound a little path, manifestly used by goats and goat-herds. Below her Peking lay spread out—a city turned by the trees which grow in every courtyard into the semblance of a green wood, out of which rose the immense golden roofs of the Forbidden City; beyond it, far away, the faint mauve line of the Western Hills hung on the sky. But Mrs. Bowlby had no eyes for the unparalleled view. Peeping cautiously through the battlements she located the Buick saloon, shining incongruously neat and modern in its squalid and deserted surroundings; by it she took her bearings, and moved with a beating heart along the little path between the thorns. Hoopoes flew out in front of her, calling their sweet note, and perched again,

raising and lowering their crests; she never heeded them, nor her torn silk stockings. Now she was above the car: yes, there was the lane up which they had come, and the wall beyond it was the wall of that house! She could see the doorkeeper, doll-like below her, still standing in his scarlet doorway, watching the car curiously. The garden wall stretched up close to the foot of the City Wall itself, so that, as she came abreast of it, the whole compound—the house, with its manifold courtyards, and the formal garden—lay spread out at her feet with the minute perfection of a child's toy farm on the floor.

Mrs. Bowlby stood looking down at it. A dream-like sense of unreality came over her, greater than any yet caused even by her impossible voice. A magnificent white pine, trunk and branches gleaming as if whitewashed among its dark needles, rose out of the garden, and below it stood a round stone table among groups of lilacs. Just as the voice had described it! Close by, separated from the pine garden by a wall pierced with a fan-shaped doorway, was another with a goldfish pond shaped like a shamrock, and round it stood a square pleached alley of acacias. Flowers in great tubs bloomed everywhere. Here was the very setting of her lovers' secret idyll; silent, sunny, sweet, it lay under the brooding protection of the Tartar Wall. Here she was indeed near to the heart of her mystery, Mrs. Bowlby felt, as she leaned on the stone parapet, looking down at the deserted garden. A strange fancy came to her that she would have liked to bring Jim here, and people it once again. But she and Jim, she reflected with a little sigh, were staid married people, with no need of a secret haven hidden away in the East City. And with the thought of Jim the claims of everyday life reasserted themselves. She must go—and with a last glance at the garden she hastened back to the car.

During the next day or so Mrs. Bowlby brooded over her new discovery and all that had led to it. Everything—the place where the address had been given by the voice, the flicker of recognition on the faces of the servants at the house in the French Legation, the fact of the doorkeeper in the East City having mentioned a 'Fa-kwa t'ai-t'ai' as his late employer, pointed to one thing—that the former owner of the Buick saloon had lived in the house where she had first called on that momentous afternoon. More than ever, now, the thing took hold of her—having penetrated the secret of the voice so far, she felt that she must follow it further yet. Timid or not, she must brace herself to ask some questions.

At a dinner a few nights later she found herself seated next to Mr. van Adam. Mr. van Adam was an elderly American, the *doyen* of Peking society, who had seen everything and known everyone since before Boxer days—a walking memory and a mine of social information. Mrs. Bowlby determined to apply to him. She displayed unwonted craft. She spoke of Legation compounds in general, and of the French compound in particular; she praised the garden of the house where she had called. And then, 'Who lived there before the Vernets came?' she asked, and waited eagerly for the answer. Mr. van Adam eyed her a little curiously, she thought, but replied that it was a certain Count d'Ardennes. 'Was he married?' Mrs. Bowlby next enquired. Oh yes, he was married right enough—but the usual reminiscent flow of anecdote seemed to fail Mr. van Adam in this case. Struggling against a vague sense of difficulty, of a hitch somewhere, Mrs. Bowlby pushed on nevertheless to an enquiry as to what the Comtesse d'Ardennes was like. 'A siren!' Mr. van Adam replied briefly—adding 'Lovely creature, though, as ever stepped.' He edged away rather from the subject, or so it seemed to Mrs. Bowlby, but she nerved herself to another question—'Had they a car?' Mr. van Adam fairly stared, at that; then he broke into a laugh. 'Car? Why, yes—she went everywhere in a yellow Buick—we used to call it "the canary".' The talk drifted off on to cars in general, and Mrs. Bowlby let it drift; she was revolving in her mind the form of her last question. Her curiosity must look odd, she reflected nervously; it was all more difficult, somehow, than she had expected. Her craft was failing her—she could not think of a good excuse for further questions that would not run the risk of betraying her secret. There must have been a scandal—there *would* have been, of course; but Mrs. Bowlby was not of the order of women who in Peking ask coolly at the dinner-table, 'And what was *her* scandal?' At dessert, in desperation, she put it hurriedly, baldly—'When did the d'Ardennes leave?' Mr. van Adam paused before he answered—'Oh, going on for a year ago, now. She was ill, they said—looked it, anyway—and went back to France. He was transferred to Bangkok soon after, but I don't know if she's gone out to him again. The East didn't suit her.' 'Oh, poor thing!' murmured Mrs. Bowlby, softly and sincerely, her heart full of pity for the woman with the lovely voice and the lovely name, whose failing health had severed her from her Jacques. Not even love such as hers could control this wretched feeble body,

reflected Mrs. Bowlby, whom few places suited. The ladies rose, and too absorbed in her reflections to pay any further attention to Mr. van Adam, she rose and went with them.

At this stage Mrs. Bowlby went to Pei-t'ai-ho for the summer. Peking, with a temperature of over 100 degrees in the shade, is no place for delicate women in July and August. Cars are not allowed on the sandy roads of the pleasant straggling seaside resort, and missionaries and diplomatists alike are obliged to fall back on rickshas and donkeys as a means of locomotion. So the Buick saloon was left in Peking with Jim, who came down for long weekends as often as he could. Thus separated from her car, and in changed surroundings, Mrs. Bowlby endeavoured to take stock of the whole affair dispassionately. Get away from it she could not. Bathing, idling on the hot sunny beach, walking through the green paths bordered with maize and kaoliang, sitting out in the blessedly cool dark after dinner, she found herself as much absorbed as ever in this personality whose secret life she so strangely shared. Curiously enough, she felt no wish to ask any more questions of anyone. With her knowledge of Madame d'Ardenne's name the sense of eavesdropping had returned in full force. One thing struck her as a little odd: that if there *had* been a scandal she should not have heard of it—in Peking, where scandals were innumerable, and treated with startling openness and frank disregard. Perhaps she had been mistaken, though, in Mr. van Adam's attitude, and there had not been one. Or—the illumination came to her belated and suddenly—hadn't Mr. van Adam's son in the Customs, who went home last year, been called Jack? He had! and Mrs. Bowlby shuddered at the thought of her clumsiness. She could not have chosen a worse person for her enquiries.

Another thing, at Pei-t'ai-ho, she realised with a certain astonishment—that she had not been perceptibly shocked by this intrigue. Mrs. Bowlby had always believed herself to hold thoroughly conventional British views on marriage; the late owner of the Buick saloon clearly had not, yet Mrs. Bowlby had never thought of censuring her. She had even been a little resentful of Mr. van Adam's calling her a 'siren.' Sirens were cold-hearted creatures, who lured men frivolously to their doom; her voice was not the voice of a siren. Mrs. Bowlby was all on the side of her voice. Didn't such love justify itself, argued Mrs. Bowlby, awake at last to her own moral failure to condemn another, or very nearly? Perhaps, she caught herself thinking, if people knew as much

about all love-affairs as she knew about this one, they would be less censorious.

Mrs. Bowlby stayed late at Pei-t'ai-ho, well on into September, till the breezes blew chilly off the sea, the green paths had faded to a dusty yellow, and the maize and kaoliang were being cut. When she returned to Peking she was at once very busy—calling begins all over again after the seaside holiday, and she spent hours in the Buick saloon leaving cards. The voice was with her again, as before. But something had overshadowed the blissful happiness of the spring days; there was an undernote of distress, of foreboding, often, in the conversations. What exactly caused it she could not make out. But it increased, and one day half-way through October, driving in the East City, the voice dropped away into a burst of passionate sobbing. This distressed Mrs. Bowlby extraordinarily. It was a strange and terrible thing to sit in the car with those low, heart-broken sounds at her side. She almost put out her arms to take and comfort the lovely unhappy creature—but there was only empty air, and the empty seat, with her bag, her book, and her little calling list. Obeying one of those sudden impulses which the voice alone seemed to call out in her, she abandoned her calls and told Shwang to drive to the Por Hua Shan Hut'ung. As they neared it the sobs beside her ceased, and murmured apologies for being '*un peu énérvée*' followed.

When she reached the house Mrs. Bowlby got out, and again climbed the ramp on to the Tartar Wall. The thorns and bushes between the battlements were brown and sere, and no hoopoes flew and fluted among them. She reached the spot where she could look down into the garden. The lilacs were bare now, as her own were; the tubs of flowers were gone, and heaps of leaves had drifted round the feet of the acacias—only the white pine stood up, stately and untouched by the general decay. A deep melancholy took hold of Mrs. Bowlby; already shaken by the sobs in the car, the desolation of this deserted autumn garden weighed with an intense oppression on her spirit. She turned away, slowly, and slowly descended to the Buick. The sense of impending misfortune had seized on her too; something, she vaguely felt, had come to an end in that garden.

As she was about to get into the car another impulse moved her. She felt an overmastering desire to enter that garden and see its features from close at hand. The oppression still hung over her, and she felt that a visit to the garden might in some way

resolve it. She looked in her purse and found a five-dollar note. Handing it to the startled Shwang—'Give that,' said Mrs. Bowlby, 'to the *k'ai-men-ti*, and tell him I wish to walk in the garden of that house.' Shwang bowed; rang the bell; conversed; Mrs. Bowlby waited, trembling with impatience, till the clinching argument of the note was at last produced, and the old man whom she had seen before beckoned to her to enter.

She followed him through several courtyards. It was a rambling Chinese house, little modernised; the blind paper lattices of the windows looked blankly on to the miniature lakes and rocky landscapes in the open courts. Finally they passed through a round doorway into the garden below the Tartar Wall, and bowing, the old custodian stood aside to let her walk alone.

Before her rose the white pine, and she strolled towards it, and sitting down on a marble bench beside the round stone table, gazed about her. Beautiful even in its decay, melancholy, serene, the garden lay under the battlements which cut the pale autumn sky behind her. And here the owner of the voice had sat, hidden and secure, her lover beside her! A sudden burst of tears surprised Mrs. Bowlby. Cruel Life, she thought, which parts dear lovers. Had *she* too sat here alone? A sharp unexpected sense of her own solitude drove Mrs. Bowlby up from her seat. This visit was a mistake; her oppression was not lightened; to have sat in this place seemed somehow to have involved herself in the disaster and misery of that parted pair. She wandered on, through the fan-shaped doorway, and came to a halt beside the goldfish pond. Staring at it through her tears, she noticed the repair to the coping of which the voice had spoken, where 'Jacques' had made an inscription in the damp mortar. She moved round to the place where it still showed white against the grey surface, murmuring, '*Maintenant il se lit là pour toujours, ton amour!*'—the phrase of the voice had stayed rooted in her mind. Stooping down, she read the inscription, scratched out neatly and carefully with a penknife in the fine plaster:

'Douce sépulture, mon coeur dans ton coeur,
Doux Paradis, mon âme dans ton âme.'

And below two sets of initials:

A. DE A.
de
J. St. G. B. B.

The verse touched Mrs. Bowlby to fresh tears, and it was actually a moment or two before she focused her attention on the initials. When she did, she started back, as though a serpent had stung her, and shut her eyes, and stood still. Then with a curious blind movement she opened her bag and took out one of her own cards, and laid it on the coping beside the inscription, as if to compare them. 'Mrs. J. St. G. B. Bowlby'—the fine black letters stared up at her, uncompromising and clear, from the white oblong, beside the capitals cut in the plaster. There could be no mistake. Her mystery was solved at last, but it seemed as if she could not take it in. 'Jim?' murmured Mrs. Bowlby to herself, as if puzzled—and then 'Jacques?' Slowly, while she stood there, all the connections and verifications unrolled themselves backwards in her mind, with devastating certainty and force. Her sentiment, her intuition on the Wall had been terribly right—something *had* come to an end in that garden that day. Standing by the shamrock pond, with the first waves of an engulfing desolation sweeping over her, hardly conscious of her words, she whispered, 'Pourtant cela porte bonheur, le trèfle, n'est ce pas?'

And with that second quotation from the voice she seemed at last to wake from the sort of stupor in which she had stood. Intolerable! She must hear no more. Passing back, almost running, into the pine garden, she beckoned to the old *k'ai-men-ti* to take her out. He led her again, bowing, through the courtyards to the great gateway. Through the open red and gold doors she saw the Buick saloon, dark and shiny, standing as she had so often, and with what pleasure, seen it stand before how many doors? She stopped and looked round her almost wildly—behind her the garden, before her the Buick! Liu caught sight of her, and flew to hold open the door. But Mrs. Bowlby did not get in. She made Shwang call a ricksha, and when it came ordered him to direct the coolie to take her to the Bank house. Shwang, exercising the respectful supervision which Chinese servants are wont to bestow on their employers, reminded her that she was to go to the polo to pick up the *lao-yé*, Bowlby. Before his astonished eyes his mistress shuddered visibly, from head to foot. 'The Bank! The Bank!' she repeated, with a sort of desperate impatience.

Standing before his scarlet door, lighting his little black and silver pipe, the old *k'ai-men-ti* watched them go. First the ricksha, with a small drooping grey figure in it, lurched down the dusty *hu-t'ung*, and after it, empty, bumped the Buick saloon.

THE FLIGHT OF A KING.

BY COLONEL P. T. ETHERTON.

I HAVE often looked around for a new way of spending a holiday, something over which hangs the halo of romance, with peeps into the brave days of old, and wanderings off the beaten track. This is a little difficult to find when you have travelled in forty-three countries, and have searched most of the wide world over for something new, something original and exciting.

I came across the new idea in a curious way. I was motoring through the western part of Sussex, on the borders of Hampshire, famous for its beautiful combes, its downs, and forests of beech and oak trees, and pulled up at an old thatched cottage that had obviously stood for at least five centuries, just the cottage we read of in the story books, with tiny windows, old oak beams, a garden full of scented flowers, and a background formed by the forest-clad slopes of the Downs.

It seemed a sacrilege to intrude the modern car in this haunt of ancient peace, so I left it in the roadway beneath the shadow of a giant oak, and went forward on foot to reconnoitre. It was a glorious summer day, the sun shining from a cloudless sky, such a day as brings out the spirit of goodwill toward men. In the doorway reclined a black cat, who, with a shaggy sheep-dog, greeted me affectionately, and straightway I felt at home.

The Sussex cottager is likewise friendly, and glad to see you and hear something of the world beyond his own four walls. So it came to pass that I was invited within and treated to a glass of home-made wine, such wine as I have rarely tasted, although my wanderings have taken me through the vineyards of the fair land of Gaul.

Picture if you can this quaint interior, with its solid oak table, its rush-seated chairs, and its ingle nook, the massive beams running across the low ceiling, and the stone floor laid in the reign of bluff King Hal, and you will realise that here were possibilities. As I have said, the wine was good and the cottager loquacious; moreover, a bond of sympathy was established between us, for was I not myself of Sussex and my father and grandfather before

me? Perhaps this was the golden key; at any rate, I was told that here royalty had passed the night, to wit King Charles II, who had apparently tarried at the cottage in his flight through Sussex after the battle of Worcester in 1651.

My curiosity was now aroused, and so we climbed a rickety staircase to the room above with more beams and woodwork. Sure enough, over the ancient mantelpiece was the fugitive king's coat-of-arms, placed there after the Restoration, two hundred and seventy years ago, and so all doubt in my mind was dispelled. Legend and tradition still survive in this old-world corner of England, whilst romance is linked with the journey of Charles II, beset with adventures and narrow escapes. Thus my visit to that medieval cottage determined me to follow the fortunes of the king through Sussex until he boarded the tiny brig at Shoreham which took him to France, where he spent nine years in exile before he came into his own again.

The famous battle of Worcester on September 3, 1651, saw the defeat of Charles II and the Royalist Party and the definite advent of Cromwell and the Commonwealth. After the fight, when all was lost, the king had the greatest difficulty in getting away from the scene of action, and no doubt he passed through some thrilling moments before reaching the Sussex border where he entered upon the most perilous stage of his journey. It had taken over five weeks to reach this point, and on the night of October 13 his guide, Lord Wilmot, afterwards the dissolute Earl of Rochester, went to Colonel Gunter's house at Racton, in South Hampshire, adjacent to the Sussex border, and informed the colonel, a staunch royalist, that the king was in hiding close by and wished to secure a boat to cross over to France. Colonel Gunter had only that evening returned from London, a long ride of sixty-five miles through dense forests and across the Surrey hills and Sussex downs, a journey that took a couple of days' hard going, with the ever-present risk of meeting highway robbers and footpads that infested the roads. In these days we cover the distance in two and a half hours, with little risk beyond that of falling into a police-trap.

It was nearing midnight when Wilmot arrived and conveyed the startling news to Gunter; the latter realised the necessity for immediate action, but also that their every movement must be made with the utmost circumspection, in view of the hue and cry and ceaseless activity of Cromwell and his Roundheads. The story goes that Gunter's wife, who was in the house but not ac-

quainted with the secret, became deeply suspicious ; her feminine curiosity was thoroughly aroused and she conjured up visions of impending disaster, for the country was under martial law and none knew what dire fate might not overtake royalists and those on whom suspicion fell. Colonel Gunter evaded his wife's questions, until, as an old narrative I unearthed put it, ' she broke out into a great passion of weeping.'

Finally it was decided between Wilmot and the colonel that the lady should be taken into their confidence, with the happiest results, the story adding that success was largely due to her, and the consummate ability she displayed in the scheme for the fugitive king's welfare. Most stories have a sequel ; years afterwards, when the Merry Monarch had regained the throne and was once more firmly in the saddle, Mrs. Gunter appealed to him. She had, in the meantime, been left a widow, the gallant colonel having perished on foreign service, and came to the king to remind him of his promise to make provision for her only child, a boy, which the ruler had declared his intention of doing. Charles was casual and happy-go-lucky, but in the end the widow secured a small allowance. No reward was ever more richly deserved, for to Colonel Gunter's sagacity and skill Charles undoubtedly owed his life, as we shall see hereafter.

Of the gallant colonel's home nothing remains, beyond the foundations on which a farmhouse now stands. The glamour of romance hangs over all this enchanting district, for hard by is an ancient manor where lived Cardinal Pole who became Archbishop of Canterbury in Henry VIII's reign, but whose life was clouded by tragedy. His mother the Countess of Salisbury, although well over seventy years of age, was beheaded by Henry, since she had dared to join in the protest of the nation against the injustice and gross want of feeling that marked the execution of Anne Boleyn, and the subsequent love intrigues of the ruthless monarch.

I was told that the manor is haunted by the ghost of the Countess and none dare go near it after dark, for does not the aged lady appear during the silent watches of the night with a red streak round her neck ?

To return to Racton House. Lord Wilmot remained there whilst Gunter, despite his long and tiring ride, went off to search for a boat from the tiny port of Emsworth, a few miles away. Nothing could be found, several other places along the coast being

also tried in vain. Dawn came and still the quest was continued, Gunter being a man of action and a devoted adherent of the monarchy. Meanwhile, Lord Wilmot had returned to report to Charles, leaving Gunter to provide the solution to the problem. Long and anxiously he must have thought, and then it occurred to him that a friend of his, Mansell, who happened to be at Chichester four miles away, and engaged in the wine trade with France, might be able to assist.

So Gunter hastened to Chichester where he found Mansell. Over a bottle of rare wine and a pipe of the best Spanish tobacco Gunter led up to the matter of the boat. It was far too risky to say that the passenger would be the king, so the resourceful colonel met the difficulty by explaining that two of his friends had been engaged in a duel, with the result that affairs had taken a serious turn and he was compelled to get them out of England, or all sorts of trouble would ensue, and he might even himself be involved in the complications. Mansell was sympathetic, and said he could arrange for the exit of the duellists by a brig from Brighton. This meant a journey for the king of over forty miles along the coast, and every hour was vital, considering the drastic search and the manner in which the countryside was being combed out. Moreover, Charles' height, build, and dark complexion made him a person difficult to disguise.

Unfortunately for the king and Gunter it happened to be Sloe Fair day, a great event in this part of Sussex, for from the sloes gin was made, and a roaring trade done in those good old times when inns were famous for their brews, and the fare they provided for the traveller. Gunter offered Mansell fifty pounds down if he would start with him right away, but the sloes won, and so the departure was fixed for the morrow. Gunter's energy was amazing; he set out the next morning for Brighton accompanied by Mansell, to find that the master of the brig, in which it was proposed to embark the erring fighters, had gone to Shoreham, where in the course of the day they ran him to ground. It was a comparatively easy task to find the boat and its master, but when it came to an adjustment of the price demanded for the journey to France with the pseudo-duellists, here, indeed, was an obstacle to overcome. The king was penniless, Wilmot possessed only what he stood up in, and Gunter had been so harassed by Cromwellian requisitions in money and kind, that he was practically bankrupt. Every artifice was tried, but the master was adamant, so finally the

bargain was clinched—sixty pounds, a fortune in those days, to be paid down before the men went on board, the boat to be in readiness to leave at an hour's notice.

All this being duly arranged, Gunter rode back fifty miles to where the king was in hiding, arriving about midnight. When we consider the state of the roads, the dense forests covering Sussex at that time, and the wind and pelting rain that harassed him throughout the journey, it was surely a record in cross-country riding.

Charles was delighted with Gunter's success, declaring, *inter alia*, that he should be nominated a saint in the calendar for all time. The next move in the drama took the king to the house of Gunter's brother-in-law, one Symons, near Hambledon, whence it was determined to make for Brighton and Shoreham.

Colonel Gunter was thoroughly acquainted with the country between Racton and Brighton, and it was decided not to take the direct road, but to travel by way of the downs, the rendezvous with the master of the brig being fixed at the George Inn at Brighton. In those days Shoreham was a well-known port and dockyard, supplying fighting ships to the navy, hence was likely to be under stricter observation than Brighton. Further, the route over the downs being wooded and hilly afforded more protection.

Doubtless the hill route was chosen to avoid the roads and tracks through the valleys, which in those days were notorious for mud and ruts. Indeed, a famous wit of the day attributed the long legs of the Sussex men and women to the constant pulling of the feet out of so much mud that the legs thereby became lengthened.

A thorough search had been made along the coast west of Southampton, as it was not anticipated that the king would be able to get so far away from the scene of his defeat as he actually did, but when no trace of the fugitive could be found at the ports due south of Worcester a wider sweep of the net was made. It was not believed that he could travel any distance through the country without being captured, so keen and close was the watch.

The king's party now consisted of himself, Lord Wilmot, Colonel Gunter, and a trusted servant. Charles was disguised as a Roundhead groom and, as befitted his new rôle, rode behind the small cavalcade. So began the journey to Symons' house, to be followed by the most critical stage of the flight.

They arrived there at nightfall, to learn that Symons was out merry-making, he being fond of the bottle and good cheer. The

host appeared whilst the party were at supper, and seeing Gunter and his friends he greeted them jovially, clapping the king on the back, and, unaware of his identity, declared he was glad to see him as a friend of his brother-in-law, even if he were a — Roundhead.

Royalist though he was, Symons was too irresponsible to be trusted with so vital a secret as the identity of the Roundhead, and so he remained in blissful ignorance of the person with whom he cracked his ribald jokes and toasted in many cups of sack, for Charles was a noted wit and the two seem to have hit it off remarkably well together, despite his calling and disguise.

Before dawn the little party quitted the house, Gunter having secured a couple of greyhounds as a blind to give the impression that they were bent on coursing. They crossed Broad Halfpenny Down, afterwards famous as the spot where the first cricket match in England was played during the reign of George II, to the confines of Stansted Forest in Sussex, then the seat of Lord Lumley. This beautiful domain is full of oak trees which in days gone by contributed a goodly share to the wooden walls of Old England; through its glades and magnificent central drive the king's party rode, avoiding the Elizabethan house, burnt down about thirty years ago, and gained the slopes of Stoke Down, a spur of which they crossed into Kingly Vale, a little-known part of Sussex, but one that is full of history and romance.

The chief feature of Kingly Vale is a grove of giant yew trees. Tradition has it that they date back for two thousand years, that the Druids held their human sacrifices here, the victims being enclosed in wooden cages and placed upon the flaming altar, while centuries later the Saxons and Danes met here in a terrific battle, the number of killed being so great that the barrows constituting their last resting-place cover the crest line of the hill above the Vale. I counted more than twenty in a space of roughly three acres, so it must have been a fight to a finish.

Kingly Vale is a beautiful but sombre spot, its bowl-shaped hollow running deep into the hills above it. The latter are thickly wooded, the trees being overhung with wild clematis. The central part of the Vale is a carpet of lawn grass, and the general impression is that of one of the most exquisite pictures Sussex affords.

At nightfall it is an eerie spot; indeed, it is by moonlight that this Vale is most wonderful to see. Its loneliness and the sense that it is invested with age-old tradition are most fully understood

when night has fallen upon its silent groves. The moon casts slinking shadows that fill the walks and pathways, and a wan light inundates the great central grove of yews. They cast such silhouettes that it would not be surprising if a Druidic procession stepped out into the open.

It is said that Charles halted here awhile and remarked upon this romantic and fascinating glade, the abiding place of witchcraft and unquiet spirits, into which the superstitious might think twice before venturing.

From Kingly Vale Charles and his followers made their way over the Goodwood downs, past what is now Trumble Hill and the racecourse, to the summit of Glatton Hill, whence there is a magnificent view seawards to the Channel and Isle of Wight and northwards over the Weald of Sussex to the Surrey hills, such a panorama as compelled the admiration of the monarch, who exclaimed, 'This is a country worth fighting for.' If scenery and charm of surroundings could compensate him, then he could consider himself domiciled in luxury.

East of Glatton Hill, a couple of miles away, they reached Houghton Forest, one of the best examples of the forests of medieval England, resplendent with oak and beech trees, and still open for all to wander in, thanks to the generosity of its owner, the Duke of Norfolk.

The king's party entered this woodland paradise where they were destined to have a dramatic encounter with the fanatical Cromwellian governor of Arundel Castle, Colonel Morley. The latter was a notorious martinet who had been placed in charge of Arundel and district, and was conducting the most rigorous search for the vanished monarch, for whom there would have been short shrift in Morley's hands.

We can picture the party making their way stealthily, still eastwards, through the dense forest. Colonel Gunter went ahead, followed by Lord Wilmot and then the king. Suddenly the colonel pulled up his horse; a cavalcade was moving towards them through the woods. 'We are undone,' whispered Gunter, 'it is Colonel Morley, the Governor of Arundel Castle.' Aghast at the critical situation they were in, he was about to turn round when the king urged, 'Let us go boldly forward and they will not suspect.' So on they went, with the thrilling sense of a beast of prey moving towards them, and imagination conjuring up hope and fear. We can imagine the tense feelings with which those moments were

loaded, the suspense that must have gripped them when the truculent governor hailed the party and commanded them to his presence.

Gunter was chief spokesman, and in answer to the governor's enquiries as to their business, replied that they were out coursing, the greyhounds giving weight to the statement. Awkward questions on the composition of the party were successfully combated, and with a curt nod the governor let them proceed on their way. The relief at their escape from this meeting must have been tremendous, and Gunter records that when they had passed out of hearing, Charles remarked, 'I did not like the look of his moustachios.'

Emerging from Houghton Forest, close by the summit of Bury Hill and the cross-roads at the entrance to Arundel Park, passed in these times by scores of motorists daily, Gunter led the way down the northern slopes of the hill, along an unfrequented lane, which even now is known only to the shepherd and the toiler in the fields. It took them to an old inn at Houghton. That old inn, the rise of which is lost in the mists of antiquity, is still there, with its ancient doorway, its solid oak beams, the ingle nook, and the settle on which many a yarn has been told since the days before Good Queen Bess and on through the years to the twentieth century.

Here the king and his companions halted for a flagon of ale and to munch some bread and a neat's tongue which the thoughtful Gunter had put in his pocket. Then they went on down into the valley lying north of the Downs, to the Arun, which turns here from west to south on its way to the sea at Littlehampton. The river is crossed by an ancient stone bridge, a pocket history in itself. The massive stone arches supporting the structure testify to the skill of those early builders, and in their time Saxon and Norman, Tudor and Georgian, have passed over them. Beyond the bridge lies Amberley Castle, where the king is reputed to have stayed, but I could find no evidence of this. Above the castle is Amberley Down, and here the king's horse cast a shoe, necessitating a fresh descent into the valley at Burpham, one of the loveliest villages in England. It lies in a fold of the South Downs, and the only sign indicating a village is the church spire peeping out from a clump of trees. It stands on a low promontory that looks out over the marshes of the Arun to Arundel Castle, the river winding along the base of the castle, beneath the shade of trees, where that

rarity among birds, the kingfisher, can still be seen. Of the smithy, at which local tradition told me Charles halted, there is nothing left, save the site, but legend fills in the story. The smith knew his trade, he could distinguish one shoe from another, for the pattern at that time varied in different counties, and he was interested to see that two of the shoes were not of Sussex make! This awkward observation was apparently adequately explained away by the customer, and then the conversation appears to have turned on the subject of King Charles and the strenuous search being made for him, the smith remarking with some heat that he would like to hammer the king as hard as he did the nails of his customer's horse-shoes. Little did the truculent smith realise how near he was to the object of his dislike!

Quitting Burpham, they climbed on to the Downs once more, heading for Findon and the old Roman encampment on Cissbury Hill, and so past Chanctonbury Ring down into the valley at Bramber. It is a glorious route to follow, the scenery is unsurpassed, and for part of the distance you traverse the old Roman road that the legions of Caesar made to link up the fortified points along this 'chain of majestic mountains,' as Gilbert White styled them.

Fresh perils awaited the king at Bramber; the party was in single file, with Lord Wilmot at the moment leading, when at a bend in the road they came on a troop of Ironsides, the renowned cavalry of Cromwell. Wilmot turned round, suggesting instant flight, which would have been fatal. Colonel Gunter, knowing the futility of such a move, and recalling their former escape, pushed ahead, saying, 'Let us go on and they will not molest us.' 'He saith well,' murmured the king, and on they went, the soldiers merely greeting them in a coarse but jovial way. Once more had they emerged safely from impending disaster, but the respite was not of long duration. Just beyond the village is the bridge over the Adur which it was necessary to cross, guarded though it was by Morley's cavalry. Suddenly and without warning the clatter of horses' hoofs and the shouts of the soldiery were heard; the whole troop was in full cry down the road after the fugitive party. There was nothing to do but await the crash, the king with great presence of mind directing the others to keep straight on and take no notice. This was done, and the Ironsides careered wildly past them; they were going to resume their watch over the bridge, which duty they had quitted for a brief carouse in the village inn. So impetuous was their passage down the lane that

the king narrowly escaped being unhorsed by the reckless Roundheads, who, ignorant of the prize within their grasp, allowed the party to cross with similar greetings to those that had marked their advent in the village.

The river safely over, they made once more for the heights, passing by Poynings to the downs above the tiny fishing village of Brighton, then known as Brighthelmstone. The records of the seventeenth century tell us that the vast expanse of London-by-the-Sea was then a collection of a score or so of fishermen's huts, and a quaint gabled inn known as the 'George.' The inn has gone, but the story remains and is worth the telling. The hostelry was the rendezvous for the pseudo-duellists and Tattersall, the master of the brig. They filed into the oak-panelled parlour, the landlord brought refreshment and here another shock awaited them. No sooner had Boniface appeared with the flagons than he exclaimed, on seeing the tall and dark, good-looking groom, 'It is—the king!' Fate was kind to Charles, for the landlord was a royalist, and rushing forward he dropped on his knees, seizing the king's hand and declaring that it should never be said that he had not kissed the hand of the best man in England.

After Charles' triumphal entry into London at the Restoration in 1660, the landlord took down the sign of the 'George,' replacing it with that of the 'King's Head.'

It was now late at night and Gunter urged the master to set sail, but the tide was out and the brig high and dry on the shore. There was naught to do but wait, a prey to suspense and uncertainty, with the imagination striking out flashes of hope and fear. At last towards two o'clock in the morning the tide had risen sufficiently, the brig floated on the gently moving waves, and sail was hoisted. Lord Wilmot alone accompanied the king, Colonel Gunter taking a last farewell of his majesty. They were not destined to meet again, for, as already related, this gallant friend and guide perished in a foreign land before the Restoration. He watched the brig make headway out of the harbour until it was a mile or more from the land, and then turned back to Brighthelmstone and the homeward road. At daybreak, less than three hours after the king had quitted the shore, a troop of Ironsides burst with a roar and clatter into the village, looking for a tall dark man who report declared was there or thereabouts. But they were too late, for the tall dark man was already well out in the Channel on the way to freedom.

THE GREAT 'GANGA'!

BY GEORGE HOGAN KNOWLES.

LOOSED from his high, eternal, snow-clad home—creeping from the droning, astral silence of frozen solitudes and sliding the avalanche; and, roaring down precipices in many an echoing cataract; and—lower, mocking the stately pines in silver-tongued cascades with child-like glee—limpid, resilient falls that bathe with sparkling spray, the graceful bracken and the tender maiden-hair; and, where the laughing tributaries join, gliding silently through the secret haunts of purling brooks—where the lily of the valley enchants the love-sick bee—down, down at last, into the lower world, comes the great life-giver of Hindustan, plunging and swirling in the radiant joy of Ind's generous spirit. Through mighty forests he sports, splashing the elephant herd; and, by Palace, mosque and temple, he reflects on his calm bosom the glory of lordly cities. And, far and wide, he enriches the sub-Himalayan lowlands with their sun-baked plains of pasture and agriculture; that thirst, where the monsoons weaken, for the spread of his refreshing waters.

Many beautiful legends and beliefs seem to be borne, like the bright marigolds that float in profusion, on the flower-decked foam of these waters. Where the river passes through the wilder parts of the country, the remote village people sing songs, which, their legends say, are the songs of the river. One song of promise swells on the flowing tide, in picturesque romance: 'Whosoever—irrespective of nationality, caste or creed—should be engaged near my banks—within such distance as to hear the sound of my waters—in the quest of some knowledge, or in the destruction of some dangerous beast, for the benefit of mankind, the same shall be protected by my spirit.'

Thrilling stories are told of Kings and other great personages who have hunted on these inspiring banks, and have had miraculous escapes. On hunting expeditions in the Ganges Forest Division, and in other places near the river—apart from my own personal experiences—I have been witness to some wonderful incidents of hair-breadth escapes; not only in hunting, but in other pursuits as well. On each occasion, after the particular danger had passed,

the shikaries have run to the river, and have raised a handful of its waters to their foreheads, in a most impressive thanksgiving. A memorable incident comes back to me, with all its horrors.

July, and the heavens have opened in grim reality. At the opening demonstration of the monsoons, June's extravagance in the first welcome deluge that brought promise of a normal year of prosperity, has been nothing in comparison. All nature is in harmony with the requirements of man, and the mighty Ganges is overflowing with bountiful contributions. Plunging and creaking through these turbulent waters in Eastern Bengal, a river steamer is trying to make headway against the vast current. Indian passengers crowd the lower decks, the top or boat deck being reserved for first-class passengers; among whom an occasional Englishman may be met with.

An hour ago, before we steamed away from the river calling-station where the Darjeeling mail train deposits passengers from Calcutta—who are making a river trip—I met a friend, G. P., who was a junior tea-planter from Assam. We found that we had both been invited to the silk factory of a mutual friend for a few days' change; a custom prevailing among planters who, periodically, visit each other in turn. The silk factory lay about fifteen miles up the river, on the starboard side or northern bank. We hoped to reach our landing-place by lunch-time, if no dangerous river bores obstructed the skipper's movements.

G. P., 'pour passer le temps,' had brought up from the lower deck an emaciated old snake-charmer who was an inveterate opium-eater. An indigo-dyed turban, and a saffron garment that hung on his lean body, decorated him weirdly. With his mesmeric flageolet and two baskets of snakes, he was a source of general interest in the planting community. The skipper, a Britisher, passed and said, 'Wonderful old blighter!' Jogi was the snake-charmer's nickname: he too, was on a visit to M. C. Sahib, the manager of the silk factory, with whom he had large snake dealings. Was he not, even now, taking to the Sahib a deadly cobra, freshly caught (?), for which he would receive Rs. 10.

So we were all three visiting M. C., with whose hobby—snake catching and venom collecting—we were all acquainted. M. C. was a keen, scientific naturalist—fearing no creature of the lower creation—who had learned to play the magic flute, and to handle poisonous snakes induced out of their holes. His research room was stocked with bottles of methylated spirits, containing interest-

ing specimens of both known and unknown snakes. Phials of amber-coloured venom, which he had himself extracted, were kept locked up in a glass-fronted cabinet. He spent his spare time in experimenting on fowls and rabbits, with a view to discovering a cure for snake-bite. His companionship was most educative.

The large ferry steamer arrived at last, and there stood M. C. on the high bank of the river, with his factory looming up above a clump of mango trees. He sent out a factory boat to meet us, and was delighted to see that we had brought 'Jogi.' M. C. at once proceeded to uncover the basket in which a young, light cloudy-grey cobra—the spectacled terror of India—was hissing. The brute struck out, and M. C. had a very narrow escape. 'Fierce youngster that,' he said, laughing, while the snake-charmer reprimanded him for carelessness.

But the snake had tilted the basket, and, before the snake-charmer realised what had happened, the cobra was out, and escaped into a large deep hole quite near the spot. M. C. was disappointed: he said it was the lightest marked cobra he had seen—the lighter the more venomous—and that he must have it. Notwithstanding the loss, he handed Jogi a ten-rupee note. Before we moved up to the bungalow for lunch, the programme arranged was that we were to come down to that spot in the afternoon—after tea—to enjoy a swim in the fresh flood water, and to see how a snake was caught. M. C. said he would fetch the cobra out of the hole with his own flageolet, catching it with his bare hands, after the snake-charmer's fashion. It was excellent practice, he told us. G. P. and I were keen on the bathing, but, after what we had just seen—almost a dreadful tragedy—we suggested instead a game of golf on M. C.'s sporting jungle course; but he was not to be dissuaded.

Late in the afternoon, decked out in our airy bathing costumes, the three of us walked down to the river, G. P. and I having an animated discussion with M. C. about the unnecessary risks he ran in person. But there was no shaking his determination to catch, in its own free habitat, this particular fierce young cobra. The snake-charmer had been dismissed, and was told that on no account was he to be present at the ordeal. M. C. said that the critical eye of such an expert would embarrass him.

From the snake's hole—about fifty paces from the edge of the river—the high bank recedes down to an inlet of water; a fair sized river-bay, where a thick red current of liquid mud swirls in, and dies away into shallow back-water. Standing over the snake's

hole on the high bank, M. C.—having examined the exit—has commenced to play his flageolet. Under his instructions G. P. and I are seated on the ground about fifteen paces in front, facing him and the weird background stretching beyond. Against a leaden sky emitting in the distance, intermittently and noiselessly, flashing fangs of lightning that dip into the yellow bosom of the river, M. C.'s figure—athletic in his bathing costume—sways uncannily, now slow and now fast, to a discordant fandango. The shrill notes of his brass instrument pierce the low groaning of the rolling tide to our right, and intermingle hideously with the symphony of swirling water, and the tinkling splash of crumbling sand-banks. Not a breath of air stirs, but our own heavy respiration. Moist and clammy we feel glued to the spot, and M. C.'s instruction to freeze like statues—whatever might happen—seems easy to obey. His life, he had said, might depend upon our strict obedience.

Suddenly, we see a long, sinuous creature gliding out of the hole, and M. C. steps back a pace or two. As a climax is reached in a hoarse fanfare of blasts and trills, the long, light-grey body begins to curl, the head of the snake lifts and the hood expands. Higher it rises in a graceful curve, proud, arrogant, with the mighty power of death in its hidden fangs! And now, as the cobra's forked tongue darts in and out, a change comes over the spirit of the music—for M. C. can play the flute well—and the fearsome hood sways in sublime motion to the beautiful rhythmic strains of the Barcarolle.

Suddenly, the measured beats of the symphony die away, and M. C. drops his flute quietly behind him, on to the soft grass. The next instant, the open palm of his right hand moves in front of the hood for a few beats, in harmony with the cobra's swaying;—whose musical talent seems to mark no difference between the harmonious measures of the Barcarolle and the symphony of the breaking waters. Suddenly, the swaying hand shoots up vertically, and, close over the spectacled hood, the fingers make a smart, snapping noise. In a second the hood contracts and down slides the head. As instantly, down shoots M. C.'s hand, and a wreathing lashing mass of pale grey, and then white marble streaks—as the snake's abdomen swings round—is lifted up, well above the ground. It seems as if the nape of the snake's neck were grasped by M. C.'s fingers.

But, as we gaze terrorised, suddenly, the awful wreathing body coils round M. C.'s forearm with the grip of steel bands, and, to our horror, we see the oily head of the snake slipping from his grasp;

the purchase of the shining grey body, with its powerful contracting muscles, acting as a leverage to draw out the head. M. C.'s face grows ashen as he tries, with cool deliberation, to unwind the cobra's body with his left hand; but the coils fly back like steel springs, and M. C., probably realising the importance of not irritating the brute further, makes a rush for the shallow bay. We follow in the greatest anxiety. Land snakes dislike water. If, before the brute draws its head out, M. C. can sit down in the water, his life is saved. But—he is too late—the cobra's head is out! and G. P. and I stand benumbed with mental agony at the edge of the shallows.

Suddenly, from behind us, like a ship on fire on the far expanse of reddened water, a gorgeous monsoon sunset bursts through the clouded West. Bathed in the red flare, motionless stands the pale figure of M. C. in his sea-beach tights, knee deep in the madder muddy bay. The diabolical snake is curled fiercely round the now-extended frozen right-arm—wound round from the wrist to the armpit!—the angry head, with its full-dilated hood—free to strike at any moment—being flung back at an acute curve. The black, forked tongue protrudes within a few inches of M. C.'s frozen hand, and the eyes, struck by the flaming rays from the West, shine like ruby beads—lidless, diaphanous, unearthly eyes that glow with the merciless doctrine of fiends and devils. Dare a finger of the hand move or tremble!

But, what's that?—a dark figure, with a drawn knife, emerging from the high bank across the bay?

Warm blood suddenly courses through my veins, as my heart leaps with unbounded joy. G. P. gulps audibly and stirs, but steadies again. As swift as a darting panther with silent pads, the emaciated figure—bare to the waist—has reached the glowing, red water. Now he is moving stealthily in the liquid mass. Can M. C. hold out another few seconds without stirring? He seems unconscious of anyone behind him.

Nearer and nearer creeps the figure. Now the shrivelled, bronze form bends low with his long knife raised, and poises for a second behind the motionless hood of the cobra; who, with fiendish glee, is defying M. C.'s nerveless steadiness of hand! The sharp edge of the blade scintillates in the evening glow. Suddenly it flashes, and a clod of something grey is hurled through the air and splashes into the water.

I heard G. P. shouting, 'Good Jogi—wonderful Jogi!' as we rushed into the water and watched the snake-charmer unwinding,

off M. C.'s arm, the headless body of that ghastly snake. The brute, though a young snake, had attained the age, M. C. said, when the poison glands are fully developed. It measured three and a half feet in length.

'You didn't want me present,' said the snake-charmer, 'but,' he said, anointing his forehead with the holy water in which he stood, 'in every drop of this there is the benevolent spirit of the "Ganga," whose mandate I have but obeyed. That spirit has saved you, as it is writ; for you are trying to benefit all mankind. When you discover a cure,' he said, 'the cobra will be our best friend, for then we shall not fear him.'

'My faith,' said M. C., 'is in the wonderful faith of these Ganges people.—Whatever the object of worship,' he added, 'I believe in the mass faith of a people, if the idea be praiseworthy.'

AN ESCAPE.

BY R. J. FEIWEL.

PROFESSOR BEVERLEY turned to his wife:

'Now for the last lap.'

They had almost completed the famous four-day tour in the Dolomites and were standing on the terrace of the mountain-hotel. Below them, in the valley, lay the hotel which was their destination. Seen from this height it looked very small. 'Like a little toy house,' thought Beverley, 'which children place on the floor; and the fields and forest like a green woolly carpet.'

He turned to his wife again:

'Listen, my dear, I don't want to go down there as yet. You and the boys can go ahead and have a good rest, but I shall stay up here. For a day or two, perhaps even three days. I have a feeling that I shall be able to do a piece of work. I am so far behind with it that I must really make a better effort. Three days' hard slogging at it is what I need to finish the chapter. I have the papers here in the rucksack so that I can start straightaway. You don't mind, do you, my dear?'

Without waiting for his wife's answer he anticipated her views. 'Yes, my dear, I know that you think that I can shut myself in down at the hotel. In theory I could work there just as well as here. But in practice I can't. There are too many people we know at the hotel. And when I am with you and the boys I can't keep to myself. Not because you disturb me,' he hastened to add as he saw an anxious look on her face, 'but because I don't want to be away from you.'

A little later, sitting at one of the rough wooden tables on the terrace, just after he had seen his wife and his two sons disappear round the bend of the slope, he wondered why he had been so apologetic. After all, a man in his position must occasionally escape from family and social life in order to devote himself to his work. He reflected on his position. A few months ago he had been elected at the very early age of forty-two to the recently founded Professorship of Medieval Texts at the University of Cambridge. And already in these last weeks, as his vacation was

drawing to a close, he had begun to question himself whether he had done right in accepting the position. The purely administrative side of the work might interfere with his main task. But the question could wait. He turned once more to the papers spread on the table before him.

The attempt to work was no more successful than any other attempts during the last few weeks. After ten minutes his eyes strayed from the papers and were considering the view. From his vantage point he could see the last outposts of the Dolomites drop into the valley like jagged cliffs into a deep sea. Opposite, the first, rounded slopes of the Alps rose gently to a sun-lit height. For a long time he watched the prospect. A sparrow, growing in boldness, hopped on to his table to pick up a crumb, and darted away to safety. Behind the house some children were playing, laughing, and shouting. From the distance came the solemn tinkle of cow-bells. And of a sudden impulse Beverley folded his papers, placed them in his pocket, and set off at a rapid walk towards the path. It was of no use. The unrest was too deep within him to be conquered. He was tired of the sunny peace of green meadows and blue sky; and he found himself longing for the cool quiet of the late evening-hours on the hotel-verandah.

He had descended a considerable way when he discovered that what he had taken for the path was really the dry bed of some rivulet which had at one time or other leaped this way into the valley. After a moment's hesitation he decided to continue rather than climb back again in the hot sun. The going, easy at first, grew a little more difficult, until he had to make his way very carefully over boulders and loose rubble. Nevertheless he made steady progress. He came to a point where he could see the ground fall suddenly a short distance in front of him. Cautiously he made his way towards this spot. He wondered whether he would arrive before his family. They would certainly be surprised to see him. He must show this short cut to the boys if there was still time. In another week they would be returning to England. England, he thought, Cambridge, a rainy autumn, lectures, duties, his work. Christmas with his parents, another term, spring, crocuses shooting through the ground on the Backs, summer, white flannels, and another vacation. And so to another year in regular succession. He started as a large slab of rock, on which he had placed his foot, shot forwards as if alive, stumbled, fell, and discovered that he was slipping, sliding, falling, and utterly unable to save himself. The

entire ground under his feet seemed to be in motion. It was as if the whole world consisted of a noisy landslide of loose earth, stones and pebbles which rolled past him and under his feet and over the brink a few yards ahead. As he approached the drop he thought quickly: 'What an end to a promising career!' and simultaneously was aware of the ludicrous theatricality of the thought and its incongruity with the desperate facts. He made one last, fierce effort to stem his feet into the ground, succeeded in his immediate aim, but not altogether, for with a rattle and roar the ground moved with him. For a part of a second he felt violently, sickeningly afraid. Ahead his eye swept in one glance the dark outline of the opposite mountain range, the valley far below, and the blue sky above. His feet moved over the edge and only now, as his balance swayed over, did he seem to recognise the implications of what was happening; and again he thought, swiftly as lightning: 'This is absurd! This can't be true!' As his hands glided from the rock and he felt himself falling he experienced a terror the like of which he had not known outside the nightmares of his childhood days. For a few feet he fell, then he found himself clutching a gentle, pliant tree-top, clutching it with hands and feet and the fear of death in his heart. The tree bent under his weight, down and down. He hung head downwards and the mountain and valley rushed into the sky. There was a crackling sound of breaking wood. The young tree had broken. Beverley, still clutching it, fell helplessly for about nine feet and landed in a thick cluster of bushes. Their twigs and branches jabbed, stabbed and struck at him, then received him in their pliant, springy embrace, and, closing again above his head, blotted out the sky with cool, green foliage. Past him swept the tide of earth, stones and pebbles, leaping down the mountain side with a noise like a cannonade from a thousand rifles. The cannonade diminished to a scattered sniping which in turn gave way to stray shots at lengthening intervals, until gradually the last pebble found its rest and the only sounds were the singing in his ears, the short, difficult gasps of his breath, and the tumultuous beat of his heart.

Slowly he extricated himself from the branches and stood up. He had not a bone broken, indeed, scarcely a bruise. But his heart throbbed, his legs shook, and his bowels still retained the sensation that had been theirs when his hands slipped from the last edge of rock. He looked at the drop. It was a sheer, smooth wall of reddish rock at least thirty feet high. The miracle

which had saved him was a slim young hemlock which had given under his weight and broken six feet from the ground. The wood was white, fresh and naked where the bark had been torn; the branches of the tree swept the ground. How absurd, he thought, how accidental, that the tree should have grown thus near the rock, and that he should have fallen upon it. How queer, to think that his life had hung by a thread! 'Old chap,' he said to himself, 'by all the laws of probability you should be smashed up!' Thus his reason. But there was more than reason in his soul. There was a life force which surged in him and passionately denied all possibility of its extinction. Like another self it clamoured insistently upon his consciousness, until, indeed, his viewpoint changed so that the possibility of a sudden end became a fantastic notion and he thought: 'That I could have fallen and be no more—why, it is absurd!' Yet it was true. But the whole series of events had occurred so suddenly and unexpectedly—from the first startled moment when he had begun to slide to the last breathless fall into the saving branches, that even now in memory it bore a strange and unexpected air. Although it was true it was as odd as if, in contemplating a familiar past, he had suddenly stumbled upon the violent jarring and alien memories of another self.

Well, that was that. He had better continue his way if he wished to be back before dark. It would certainly be an experience to relate! He hitched up the rucksack which had remained on his back, and looked around. He found himself in a little hollow on the mountain side. On either side as behind him the rocks rose smooth and unclimbable. A few yards in front of him the ground ended in another drop. Slowly he stepped towards the edge. It overhung a little. He lay flat on the ground and pushed his head forward until he could see. He saw a straight drop of forty feet ending in a forested slope. It was the last drop and he was lower down the mountain than he had thought, for from this point the dark mass of pines stretched uninterrupted into the valley. That, however, was of no advantage to him. Unless he had wings forty feet were as good as four hundred. A jutting corner of rock hid the village, the lake and the hotel. The forest dipped into the valley and rose again on the slopes of the opposite range. All he could see was a sea of gently swaying pines, a rich green which melted in the distance to a dark, inky blue. If only he were down there. He would feel at home in the forest. He could walk undis-

turbed for mile after mile. But he sat marooned on the cold, unsympathetic rock.

He had seen enough, and crawled away from the edge. There was no way down. But surely there must be some way out. He examined the sides and the back of this groove on the mountain. It was quite hopeless to think of climbing them. Nor could he, without wings, continue down. He was caught. Then I haven't escaped, he thought. He sat down on a boulder, took out his watch and noted the time. Four o'clock in the afternoon. He could see that from the position of the sun, still high in the heavens. It was still very hot. He must think the position over. He, Professor Beverley, sat caught in a tiny cleft on the side of a mountain in the Dolomites. The realisation of his predicament crept over his mind until it filled all with its inarticulate fear. He stood up and passed his hand across his brow. Surely this could not be true. He retraced his anxious thoughts to the beginning of the trouble. It was all true. It had all happened, his conversation with Katherine, his decision to follow his family, his descent, the moment when he stepped upon the slab of rock which slid forward, and he with it, gathering momentum, until the slide was an avalanche and he went over the top. And here he was.

Once more his eyes swept along the rocky walls. They found no foothold. Here he would have to stay. He had said that he might stay away for three days. On the fourth Katherine would grow anxious and send someone to find out. On the fifth day people would start searching. But this was certainly the last place in which they would look to find him. The little cleft would be invisible from the village. All he could see was forest, forest. How hot it was. He passed his hand once more over his brow. Hot, and silent. Idly he bent down, picked up a stone, threw it in front of him. This was his little world. It contained a few boulders, some grass and weeds, the cluster of bushes into which he had fallen, the tree which he had broken. That was all. The towering walls of rock were the walls of his prison. The prisons which men had made for other men must be like this. There were prisoners serving life sentences. They were shut in as surely as he. Only they could not see the sky, the sun, and the hills; and they would sit longer than he, and with greater weariness. To be enclosed by prison walls all one's life! To sit in a cell month after month, year after year. When an hour, nay, a minute, could be so long. To sit until the end came and a greater mystery was solved

with the lesser. Would it not be more humane gradually to deprive these prisoners of food, so that they should pass away, just as he? His heart went out to them. And he noted with surprise that here was a side of life to which he had not given a thought for a long time. How long? Ten, twenty years?

He looked at his watch again. Half-past four. Half an hour was gone. Silently, quietly, time flowed away from him. He whistled a few notes and stopped, startled by the break in the silence. So complete had the quietness been that he had not noticed it. Now, however, it pressed upon his consciousness with double force. There was no other living being beside himself in the world which he could see. The stony lifelessness of the towering rocks held an air of inexpressible remoteness. To Beverley the silence seemed but the prelude to some startling events which were about to happen. He held his breath. Nothing happened. The sun shone on the rocks. The slightest little breeze played in the pines below. He heard his heart hammering in frightened irregular beats. Suddenly the tension broke; and a feeling of misery swept over him like a wild flood. He was alone, lost, doomed to lingering death; wretched, frightened, sweating with terror. The rocky sides grew until they towered into the sky. They were dead and inanimate and he wanted to run his head against the unfeeling stone. And again they were alive, they were malignant spirits who were crushing his little body lost in their immensity. He recalled Poe's tale of the prison walls pressing in upon the victim of the Inquisition. He had a momentary impression that the rocks were trembling. The narrowness of the cleft was stifling. He felt a desire to run to the edge and fling himself into space. He could see his body describe an arc and fall with a thud to the ground far below. He closed his eyes as if thus to ward off the image. 'I must be calm,' he said aloud. The answering silence mocked his puny voice. I must be calm, he thought, desperately. Yet the terror was like a cold hand that clutched him firmly by the neck. He rose, and sobbing out aloud, flung himself headlong into the bushes where he had lain before. Once more their branches yielded and closed above his head. It was good to lie in their cool darkness. They formed a leafy roof which shut out sky, sun and rocks. They shut out the distant hills, the silence, and his solitude. There was nothing but the sound of his own sobbing. Even that gradually quietened and became a soft, regular breathing. For a long interval he closed his eyes and rested.

The light was dancing through the leaves when he opened his eyes again. For several minutes more he watched it, lying quietly on his back. Then he rose. The fear and mountain-sickness had, like a storm, spent themselves and left calmness after them. Once more was he master of his soul. He looked at his watch again and saw that it was well after six. Already! The sun was setting in the west. The sky was almost cloudless and the evening promised to be beautiful and serene. High above him the rocks had begun to glow. He sat down on the boulder and reflected upon things. A strange end, indeed! Yet was it any the worse for that? The phrases 'early death of a distinguished scholar,' 'reported missing,' 'promising career suddenly cut short' floated before his mind like vague cinematographic images. He set himself to recall the stages of his life as a man might one evening pass the events of an ordinary day before his contemplation. He saw himself in his childhood days. How far away it seemed! Was it, indeed, part of his own life? He remembered the anxious care of his parents, the shifting pattern of light and shade of his school days. As he recalled the events they aroused no emotion. The child George Beverley lay as far back as this past itself. Its adventures caused no more stir in his mind than the adventures of his two sons. Nothing in the memories stood out and said: 'This is I! It was to myself that this happened!' Somewhere in the past there had been a child, that was all. He had long exchanged this self for another.

It was only when he arrived at his undergraduate days and saw himself as he first appeared at Cambridge that he grew to recognise the picture and feel that it was indeed his own history. He had been a very eager student, perhaps even a bookworm, but the years were a pleasant memory. The undergraduate became a graduate, then a Fellow of his College. That was eighteen years ago. From that point the course of his life had run smoothly and without change. He had lectured, coached, reviewed, written, and been surprised each time that a term had ended so quickly; travelled abroad on land and sea and been surprised again when summer and his vacation were already over. He had met Katherine in Switzerland. They had fallen in love, married, and he had exchanged his rooms in College for the comfortable little house just outside the town. The years passed in a regular succession of terms and vacations. As he grew older his lectures began to bear a sure touch. He became an authority. At the same time the

two boys had quickly ceased to be babies and passed equally quickly from the confidences of the kindergarten stage to the earnest and distant self-assurance of their public school. And as he thought of the last ten years of his life, they had dwindled in perspective to a period of time that had gone more quickly than the present afternoon. He had taken two years to write his first book. In the following four years he had been occupied with his second book. Then followed two years during which he had been occupied with his present and most important work. And so to the present summer, his holiday in the Italian Dolomites, this unfortunate descent, his fall, and his present position.

The most important work would never be completed. He pulled out two or three sheets of paper, covered with pencil notes, from his pocket, and regarded them meditatively. If anyone had only yesterday suggested to him that he would not finish the book he would have thought the notion ludicrous. Why, he had ample time and leisure. Two years, three years perhaps, possibly even four, and the thing would be done. At his age he could reasonably have expected another thirty years of life. That is the fault of this civilisation, he thought, that it leads us to believe a reasonable expectation to be a certainty. One hears of millions perishing from disease or starvation in Russia, Siberia, or China, and takes a faint interest in a far-distant event, no more. Yet, even in the most civilised countries thousands of people are killed in street accidents, thousands more are grasped by incurable diseases. And still we think ourselves immune, as if such things could happen only to others, never to us. He caught himself as even now his thoughts voiced the same sentiment. It was almost impossible to believe that this mountain-top shut in not a character from some romantic novel, but himself, Professor Beverley of Cambridge.

He wondered how his colleagues at Cambridge would take the news. 'Beverley lost in the mountains, body found a week later.' For a moment, he knew, each would feel as if a door had blown open and a cold draught entered into a warm room. Each would think: 'If Beverley, why—it might have been myself!' and feel profoundly uneasy. But only for a passing moment. The routine would go on. Atkinson would stand a good chance of succeeding to the professorship. Good luck to the fellow. And here Beverley remembered with amusement how one of the last sentences which he had written had been: 'These factors all point to a solution entirely different from that advanced by Dr. Atkinson in his recent

pamphlet on . . . ' He glanced through the sheet until he found the place. There was one point, he could see, which he had not brought out sufficiently. He had already scribbled a few pencilled words before he remembered his situation. Why not ? however, he reflected. It would be as good a way of passing the time as any other. After he had written a few lines he found the familiar task soothing and pleasant. Very soon he grew absorbed and forgot all but the problem he was considering. The sun gradually sank below the opposite range and out of the depths of the valley evening stole like a grey veil across the rich warm colour of the hillsides.

Pausing for a moment, Beverley raised his head from his manuscript, and listened intently. Two birds were singing quite close to him. He heard a clear call just in front, and a moment afterwards the answer, a little to the left. His curiosity was roused. What were these companions of his ? He laid his papers aside and approached the edge. Nothing could be seen from the point where he stood. He lay down flat once more and wriggled forward.

Very slowly and very carefully he pushed his head over the edge and peered down. A large dark-coloured bird, a blackbird, he thought, sat just below on one of the topmost branches of a tall pine. It was so close as to seem almost within reach. The bird hopped to the very tip of the branch, which swayed under his little weight, and gave sound once more. The answer came, also close at hand. Cautiously Beverley raised himself on his elbows in order to discover the second singer. As he did so both birds rose in the air, swept on, and settled in another tree a hundred yards away. Beverley remained lying on his elbows. Perhaps they had a nest in this tree. He looked carefully but could discover nothing at first. Then he discovered something for which he had not sought. His hands began to tremble. The tree was not more than eight or nine feet away. With a good leap he could clutch the trunk, just as he had unintentionally done before. And then he would climb to the ground. For a moment he did not permit himself to grasp the change in the situation. He only knew that something wonderful had happened, and that he should feel glad. Then the realisation broke in upon him. All was not lost. His calmness and his aloof detachment faded before the will to live like a thin vapour before the rays of the sun. Life, infinitely desirable and precious, was once more in his grasp. Trembling with excitement he rose, and his giddiness gone, surveyed the gap. Below loomed the depths, fearful in their promise of failure. But

it was not impossible. I can do it, he thought, I can do it. On an impulse he unstrapped his rucksack and flung it down. It fell into space, struck the ground, rolled a few feet, and lay still. If the tree broke he would fall thirty feet and land next to it. He felt the fears and hesitations creep back and stepped quietly away from the edge. No hesitation, he told himself, silencing the voice within him which muttered: You are not the man! This is no theatre! What part are you attempting to play? 'No hesitation,' he said aloud. He reached the furthest point of his run and turned to face the prospect.

Before him lay the edge of the rock, beyond it the dark outline of the opposite mountains cutting a sharp black silhouette against the clear evening sky. The latter was like a smooth, silvery sea, and the little pink clouds like giant gold-fish. He counted them. Three, four, five, six. Six little clouds on the horizon. But he must not waste his time with clouds. It was time to move on, and he must begin his run. His legs did not move. Now he was afraid, but strange—the fear seemed more in his legs than his mind. He must begin his run now. The clouds moved slowly, ever so slightly as he watched them. He would not leap, no: he would just stand for ever and watch them. Pink fish in the silver sea. The mystery of sky and clouds! The mystery of life and death! A leap—and he would succeed and be alive and Professor Beverley of Cambridge University. Or he would fail and die, and lie, a corpse, underneath the pines. And suddenly he grew really afraid. No, he would not leap. It was impossible, suicide! He had no right to take the risk. He would rather sit down and wait. Death would be slow in coming. Why should he leap towards it? What was life that he should take this risk? He would sit and linger and wait. Was not an end which would come to him slowly, gradually, almost unnoticed, the most fitting end of all? Why should he leap? It was better to stay here than to fail. It was even better to stay than to succeed. Life was a struggle; he was weary of it. There were six pink clouds in the sky. The colour, though, was fading quickly. The silver had turned grey. No, he would not leap. His legs had begun to move. He took one step, then another. He was running. Ten feet from the brink, six. No, he thought, too late to stop himself, no! I will not: Anything, anything but this! The brink leaped towards him. His feet reached the edge, and arms outstretched, he pushed himself from it as from a diving board. Once more the sensation of rushing air

and suspension in emptiness. Then a branch struck his face, and another. He grasped the slim trunk, pulled himself towards it, twined his arms and legs around. It bent under him as a blade of grass under the weight of a beetle, shook and shivered. He clung blindly, desperately, beads of sweat on his brow, and thought with each sway that he was falling. The shivering died down, the branches grew motionless. He was still clinging to the tree and discovered suddenly that he was safe.

He descended to the ground without difficulty. For a moment he stood still, leaning against the friendly trunk of the tree. He was safe. It was not easy to realise, but it was true. He was safe. He could start from this place and walk unhindered to his home. The weight was gone from his shoulders, the veil of darkness pierced. He was safe. There, forty feet above him, was the piece of rock on which he had sat. But he was below, in the forest, and safe.

New sensations rushed in upon him. He recalled his leap and was thrilled with pride. He realised that he was free to continue his life, and felt a new-born energy. Reasonably, he continued his former thought, he could expect to live another thirty years. Life stood waiting for him. And was it himself, he wondered, that had sat on a boulder in a little cleft and dispassionately abandoned his existence, and not some 'Doppelgaenger' in a shadowy play? How quickly his moods had changed! He swung the rucksack over his shoulder, and, running, walking, and leaping, made his way down through the dark, heavily-scented colonnades of the forest. His steps fell soundlessly on the soft sheet of dead brown needles. The forest was like a friendly protective spirit. It was from moods such as this, he thought, that the tales of the 'magic forest' have sprung. Almost he persuaded himself that at any moment he would come upon a grim, gaunt castle. Instead he struck a path which brought him after a few minutes to the main road.

He slowed to a walk. The first rush of energy had spent itself. He recognised the spot where the path had joined the road. It was a little less than eight miles to the hotel. He set off at a quick walk. Rapidly the sky had darkened and two or three stars twinkled overhead. The moon crept round the side of a tall peak and cast its silvery light over the scene. The wind, too, had sprung up and passed in sweeping waves over the dark crowns of the trees. Wind, moon, and forest lent an air of enchantment to the scene. He was no longer walking along an ordinary road, but

through a vast, immensely long cathedral. Never, he felt, had he walked with so easy and swinging a stride, nor known such vigour and pleasure of the body. He would rather have walked eighty miles than eight. The fall of his nailed boots against the road rang clearly through the night and found its echo in the pine trees' dark alleys; and as he descended into the valley the air grew fresh and cool.

In two hours he would be back. He thought of the hotel, of the bright dining-room, of his family, at the moment sitting down for dinner, of his whole life waiting for him. He grew aware of the unfinished sheets of paper in his pocket. He had stopped in the middle of a sentence when the bird had given sound. If he had not been curious to see the singer would he ever have discovered the chance of the leap? Or would he have sat on, enveloped by his calm detachment, until the end? The absent-minded professor! He felt a strong desire to sit down and complete the sentence. He laughed at himself. Something, he felt, had changed. This day had been different from all other days in his life. Had he really lived before, he wondered, or only dozed in an academic slumber? He recalled how he had once, in his undergraduate days, heard a famous explorer extol the virtues of risk and danger and speak disparagingly of academic life. He had objected to the remark at the time. The realm of thought had its adventures no less than any other. Yet the words had rankled. And now, twenty years later, he thought of them again and remembered the occasion of their being spoken. It was as if he understood them for the first time. The years had passed as in a flash. They seemed empty years. His life had been dull, flat, one-sided. Had he ever felt passion or emotion, or only imitation, satisfaction, and a mild, neutral contentment? The experience of the day had opened his eyes to the world. It was a world of infinite possibilities. To-day he had stared death in the face and risked all in one leap for life. This was life lived dangerously and thus fully. 'Well, what of it?' asked an inner voice, and for a moment he saw his leap like a glaring, clumsy cinema poster, something theatrical and ludicrous. The image passed as quickly as it had appeared and the triumphant mood returned. The day would change his life. Even if he did the same things or experienced the same emotions, he would do and experience them in a different, fuller way. No longer would he let his researches absorb him to such an extent that he did not exist apart from them. He could not, of course, change his pro-

fession. That was quite unthinkable. He could make more use of the ample leisure which his work afforded him, but he would never become an explorer who took risks for their own sake. If he were the same age as his boys, the choice might still be his. Or would it, even then, he thought, as already doubts assailed him again. Would he ever have chosen differently?

What were his boys choosing? They were approaching the critical age. David was over sixteen, Basil almost fifteen years. Soon they would show in which direction they were proceeding. He realised how little he knew of them. They were away at their boarding-school and busy with their own affairs in the vacation. He had not sought their company very much. He had during the last six or seven years found the company of very young people without great interest and saw that he had included his own sons in that general sentiment. How selfish, he thought, and how narrow-minded! Eagerly he planned once more to become a companion to his boys, to recapture their confidence and share their pleasures and interests.

The road, a white, moonlit strip, curved gradually into the valley. The kilometre stones passed with uncanny swiftness. Already he had covered more than half of the way. In an hour or so he would be at home. Katherine would be waiting for him. In her case, as in that of the boys, he seemed to see clearly for the first time for years. At thirty-six she was still a very young woman. What sort of life could she have been leading these last years? He had been absorbed in his work and taken her presence for granted. As if she merely were one of the comforts in life! What did she do with herself all the time? What was her own life? He knew nothing. He might have been living, for all he knew, on the very brink of disaster. What if she had one day left him? He could have had no justification for blaming her. Here was another danger, he reflected, from which he had unexpectedly escaped. And he continued pensively along the road. He would change it all. He made plans about this matter and that, thought of many aspects until his reflections faded into a general feeling of satisfaction that was one with the bodily well-being of his rhythmical stride and the cool snap of the night-air. The curves of the winding road unfolded themselves and passed as in a dream. Before he knew where he was the lights of the hotel trickled through the trees, and he had arrived.

Dinner was already over. He found his family on the verandah

where the night-moths danced round the electric lights. Katherine was knitting, mending, as he saw, the woolly scarf into which he had torn a large hole a few days ago. Her face was calm, her expression serene and contented. David leaned back in his chair, reading a motor-cycle magazine. Basil studied the sporting page of *The Times* which he had spread right across the table. The scene was one of comfort and familiarity. He felt a curious hesitation to approach them as if the few steps which he would have to take would somehow be decisive. There they sat, his wife and his sons, peacefully and at ease. Thus would they sit, if he were still shivering upon the little cleft or if he had fallen and his body lay among the boulders. He forced himself forward. They were too absorbed to notice his approach, and he startled them by flinging himself into an empty chair.

'Well,' he said, 'here I am back again.'

'Oh George!' said Katherine. 'Where have you come from! You said that you would stay for two days!'

The boys mumbled: 'Hallo, Dad!' and turned again to their reading.

He felt a little disappointed. Quite illogically, as he told himself. How could they be expected to know? Yet the feeling remained.

'Where have you been, George?' Katherine asked him. 'You haven't walked down that path in the dark, have you?'

He told them of his adventure. As he spoke he marvelled how different from the experience was the telling of it. He had not, as he noted, the gift of dramatic narration. Neither the experience nor the narration was in his line. When he saw an expression of incredulity on the boys' faces he felt already tempted to share it.

'George!' said Katherine. 'I really won't let you out of sight after this! To think of your leaping over precipices! Why, you're more reckless than Basil!'

'But my dear, if I had not jumped I would still be up there.'

'Well, the important thing is that you are here!'

Then the boys plied him with questions. He promised to show them the little cleft from above on the next suitable occasion. Their curiosity was satisfied, and they wandered away to see some friends before retiring to bed. He did not attempt to keep them back.

The last visitors had left the verandah for the warmer lounge.

Katherine and he were alone. The night-moths danced round the lights.

She looked up from her knitting.

'You must feel rather tired after your experience.'

'No, I'm not.'

'But to think of it! It just shows how dangerous these mountains are. One should never go alone. Still, the important thing is that you are here, safe and sound.'

'That's true. But it is such a fluke that I am here. If that tree had not been . . . ' Again he marvelled at his escape.

'George, don't talk about it. Try to get it from your mind. And really, you must not go alone any more. You are too absent-minded. Now that you are a professor!' She smiled at him.

'Listen, Kate,' he said. 'Do you think I am too much of a professor?'

'What do you mean, George?'

'Would it have mattered tremendously to you if I had not come back?'

She looked straight into his eyes.

'George, don't you know that you are all in the world to me?'

'Yes, but in that case . . . ' he thought quickly and unhappily. Something was wrong. He did not finish the thought but crossed to her side and put his arm about her. Striving hard to recapture the mood of the forest walk he told her of the change in his outlook which the experience had brought about. He told her of his insufficiency and of the changes which he wished to make in the future. But even as he spoke he began to doubt his own words. Was there any need of change? Katherine was by his side. She was content, and he was all the world to her. Life was like that, must be like that, ordinary and complacent. He had been chasing a shadow. He talked on. They discussed, planned, examined possibilities. And with every minute, as the difficulties were smoothed away, Beverley felt more and more that this was not what he had wanted. The change he had desired had been infinitely greater. He was unhappy. The old life laid hold of him and pulled him with a thousand familiar threads, and the glorious keen rapture of his walk through the forest fled into a cold, mountainous, region of unreality. Even as he kissed Katherine before she left him he knew that he would never achieve what he had planned, and felt miserable and dejected.

Lighting a cigarette, he lay back in his chair. The smoke

curled up, black and grey against the leaves of the creeper which were coloured a queer, unnatural green by the electric light. He followed the smoke with his eyes and considered. The dejection disappeared. After all! Already not only the exhilaration of the moonlit forest road, but also the experiences of the day, his fall, his contemplation of the sunset, his leap into the unknown, were passing from his immediate experience, losing their living qualities, and growing vague, blurred, and unreal as any memory. He watched this process without regret. The cigarette smoke, caught in the breeze, curled through the leafy verandah roof. He grew aware of the sheets of paper in his pocket and of his unfinished sentence. He took the papers from his pocket; smoothed the creases with his hand. 'And I believed that I had escaped,' he thought suddenly, with one last painful pang that was as the anguish of countless wasted opportunities; 'and I find my escape an illusion, and that I am back in the cage.' But only for a moment did the thought endure. His mind was, after all, logical. 'What cage?' he reflected, as he rose and threw the rest of the cigarette away. 'I am thinking nonsense. This, after all, is my life, and my life's work.'

He sat down again, laid the paper on the table and finished the sentence.

EDWARD CLODD.

I FIRST met Edward Clodd at a dinner of the Rationalist Press Association in May, 1909. He was born in 1840, like my tutor H. E. Luxmoore, and I was just at the right age to appreciate him. He had liked a book of mine which the Association had just published in a cheap edition. I had recently married a granddaughter of Professor Huxley, who was always a hero to Clodd and was only fifteen years his senior. We were both also members of the Savile Club. Clodd's decisions were as rapid in pleasure as in business, and after five minutes' talk he delighted me by asking me to stay with him at Aldeburgh.

One either likes Aldeburgh or one does not. The desolate heaths and scattered firs and pines, flourishing on the banks of the almost estuarial River Alde and looking out on a sea which even in the finest weather is of a brownish-green hue, are quite in harmony with and adapted to the bracing gales of East Anglia. Clodd's home (which was certainly Liberty Hall for his guests, many of whom were Liberal stalwarts, but was paradoxically known as *Strafford House*), stood almost on the shingle and one heard without ceasing 'the melancholy long-withdrawing roar' of the waves just outside. The place always attracted me and it seemed a singularly appropriate background for my host's austere and strenuous speculations on the universe. Indeed, the scenery is associated with more than one haunting tale from the Provost of Eton, who spent much of his youth in the large house immediately below the parish churchyard. But as often happens in Norfolk and Suffolk, the bleak exterior was symmetrically balanced by a cosy interior. The dining-room and study were rather like large ship's cabins. They contained a remarkable library and many fleshly comforts. The walls were covered with signed photographs of persons known to the modern journalist as 'Victorian giants.'

In these surroundings Edward Clodd radiated a peculiar blend of benevolence, scholarship, and wit. His welcome on arrival had for me all the charm of a Handelian aria with its genial but well-ordered gaiety. A week-end, whether alone with him and some crony like William Cotton or on the full-dress scale, meant a con-

tinuous flow of good talk, good cheer, and physical and intellectual exhilaration. We either helped to navigate his boat the *Lotus* up or down the Alde in summer or walked about the country in winter, and even when he was 86 he and I walked our regular two hours on Sunday morning.

It will be seen that on my first meeting with Edward Clodd he was in his sixty-ninth year, and by that time he had done most of his best work and made most of his friends. Indeed Huxley, Clifford, Meredith, Cotter Morison, and Samuel Butler were dead. I had been long acquainted with Professor York Powell, Sir Ray Lankester, Lionel Robinson, Sir Frederick Pollock, and had met Sir Alfred Lyall; but from the moment I met Clodd I made through him a number of new and interesting friends such as Professor Bury, Sir Mortimer Durand, Sir George Frampton, J. F. Green, John Henderson, Violet Hunt, Henry Nevinston, George Haven Putnam, Pett Ridge, Morley Roberts, Thomas Seccombe, Winifred Stephens (now Mrs. Whale), Clement Shorter, MacLeod Yearsley, George Whale, and H. G. Wells. I met most of them at Aldeburgh, and others at the Johnson Club and Omar Khayyám Club, both of which he had assisted to found.

He had worked for the Midland Bank, Ltd., from 1860 onwards, and in 1862 married his first wife, by whom he had eight children. She died in 1911 and was rather an invalid, so that I never saw her at all; but I did see the surviving children, especially his daughter Mrs. Graham, who lived in the neighbourhood.

By this time his books had gained a world-wide circulation. I refer particularly to the *Childhood of the World*, the *Childhood of Religion*, the *Story of the Creation*, and the *Story of Primitive Man*. His memoirs of Bates and Huxley and Grant Allen had been well received and his book *Jesus of Nazareth*, published in 1880, had made many friends, among whom Professor Huxley and Sir Frederick Pollock may particularly be mentioned.¹ In spite of his advanced Rationalism he had only once been involved in a controversy of any heat, which arose out of his reference to the singing of the Eucharistical hymn in Hawarden Church in connection with his anthropological theories about eating gods. In these theories he was strongly supported by his friend Sir James Frazer; but the doctrine was more startling to that generation than it is to ours,

¹ Huxley wrote to him about *Jesus of Nazareth*: 'It is the book I have been longing to see. In spirit, matter and form it appears to me to be exactly what people like myself have been wanting.' This welcome praise is equally applicable to nearly all his work.

and Mr. Gladstone, who was an original member of the Folklore Society, not unnaturally disliked anthropological research penetrating into his private devotions and resigned from the Society. The only other controversy in his life was his consistent denunciation of anything to do with Spiritualism and of the callous fraud so often associated with the movement.

His last book *The Question* tackles Spiritualism with considerable severity and is well worth reading since in these days Rationalism has obviously more to quarrel with in Spiritualism and in Christian Science than in the diluted faith of orthodox religions. One of his most delightful books, however, is the book entitled *Memories* which was published in 1916 and which, though free from egotism, contains charming revelations of his own character and personality.

There is much in the book that deserves quotation, but I will only cite the following passage from a letter written to Edward Clodd by York Powell, because it so admirably describes what the few survivors of the Aldeburgh week-ends are feeling at the moment :

‘ But these gaps in the ring of our lives are too many, Clodd, and I tremble now when I hear of a friend’s illness. I know how short a time one has to pass with those one loves, so few years, such a brief tale of days, opportunities snatched from the daily business and the daily cares, but the only gold beads in the chequered necklace of one’s life. I am so glad I never had the slightest even momentary feeling of coldness in the course of my friendship with any of these men. The hours I passed with them were sunny and unclouded. That is much to remember. But it was to their gentleness, not to mine, that I owe the pleasant memory. They were patient and generous and gave me credit for more than one was worth. But I really loved them all the time and I think they must have felt that.’

One naturally dwells on the conviviality of the atmosphere ; but it was intellectually as bracing as the climate. One found short cuts to knowledge everywhere and I have never known anyone so quick in finding a document or a quotation as Edward Clodd with the possible exception of Mr. Tedder, the famous librarian of the Athenæum. Clodd would produce all his treasured letters or photographs at a moment’s notice, and was not at all displeased to show a letter from Ruskin on receiving a copy of *Jesus of Nazareth*. Ruskin, perhaps like George Meredith, mistaking the portrait of Edward Clodd on the cover for that of Jesus Christ, was moved to wrath and expressed a wish that Clodd had used his study in a

somewhat unconventional manner rather than send him the book. Clodd's memory was extraordinarily retentive, whether the subject matter was grave or gay. His anecdotes were frequent but always to the point and never tiresome. After his attack of paralysis had set in his mind remained quite clear; but he suffered from an acute aphasia. Yet on one occasion when I could not remember the name of a country-house in Suffolk he suddenly said 'Earl Soham.' His knowledge of biography was almost as peculiar and extensive as his knowledge of anthropology. He enjoyed anthropology brought up to date, as for instance a suggestion in a newspaper of 1894 that Lord Rosebery was suffering from an attack of influenza because he was just about to introduce a Bill for disestablishing the Welsh Church, and he was particularly amused by a suggestion of mine that there might even now be considerable anxiety about the crops in agricultural districts if an Archbishop were ever made a co-respondent.

The sketch of him as Mr. Dodd in a book of H. G. Wells is not entirely unfair; but he had at least one superstition, namely, that he did not like his passengers to whistle on the *Lotus*, and this was natural enough in one whose father was a sea captain and who had the sea in his blood. I can well remember Major Putnam whistling for quite a long time while Clodd was at the helm. Clodd writhed under it for some time and finally I undertook a diplomatic mission to Putnam which resulted in stopping the obnoxious noise. I fancy that Clodd put up with it as long as he did because he felt that a Rationalist ought not to give way.¹ Clodd, however, allowed his guests to navigate the *Lotus* from time to time and I remember one day steering the boat for some way down the river. Morley Roberts called me a 'sea lawyer,' and suggested that he could do it better. I accordingly handed the tiller to him and within ten minutes the boat was securely lodged for twenty-four hours on a sandbank, on which I am sorry to say I suggested that he was a 'literary seaman'!

Clodd had few dislikes; but they were vigorous. All his principles of toleration vanished at the sight of a conscientious objector during the War, and he had a curious dislike for two very eminent men of letters whom I thought much easier to get on with than one or two of his habitual guests. I could never get him to state his reasons, and I fancy that he could not analyse

¹ My inference of superstition is not accepted by another person also present, who says that his real objection was to the noise itself.

them himself. He was, however, by no means fanatical in his opinions, for he numbered many clergymen, including Canon Ainger, among his friends, and he was quite as much amused as anyone else by H. G. Wells's caricatures such as the portrayal of God busily writing a book above the clouds to show that Clodd did not exist, or the picture of Clodd looking under his bed before going to sleep in order to be quite sure that God was not there. He could agree with Sir Frederick Pollock that William Blake might be aware of truths unknown to Herbert Spencer and sympathise with my annoyance at being supposed by my younger friends to quote Kipling when I was in fact quoting the Bible! His optimism was remarkable; but it was combined with occasional attacks of grave melancholy which perhaps accounted for his cult of Omar Khayyám and Dr. Johnson. He lost two of his boys, one at the age of six and the other in youth, and to the end of his life these wounds were never quite healed. In spite of his bluff manners he was the soul of tact. He never obtruded advice or criticism either in literary or personal matters; but he certainly gave very shrewd advice if he were asked for it. He would, I think, have cordially agreed with the axiom of Oscar Wilde: 'To give advice is always dangerous, but to give good advice is fatal.'

One retains of him an amazing impression of complete integrity and intellectual honesty. With all his capacity for affection he found it difficult to put up with any kind of pretence or pretentiousness and it was pathetic to see how even to the end of his life he expected everyone to be as affectionate and benevolent as himself, and was acutely disappointed when these expectations were unrealised.

The atmosphere of Strafford House was remarkable for the way in which it developed good talk and good will. I remember on my first week-end my dismay in finding that Sir Mortimer Durand was the principal guest. I knew very little about him, and his exterior was remarkably solemn and almost Teutonic. Yet within five minutes of my arrival Durand had set out on a series of most delightful humorous reminiscences and his anecdotes ranged far beyond the inhibitions of diplomatic society. One would sometimes find a set of guests who on the surface appeared acid or morose or shy, but after an hour of the Clodd atmosphere were full of vivacity and geniality. Perhaps his closest affinity was George Whale, the well-known solicitor and Mayor of Woolwich. Their talk revealed a sort of pre-existing harmony and their minds moved in the same rhythm.

When Edward Clodd retired in 1914 he had the good fortune to find a second wife who knew every inch of his library and looked after him with unswerving devotion. In his retirement he naturally saw less of his friends and she saved him from the melancholy of solitude, though he had consolations even in solitude. Keenly as I sympathised with nearly all of Edward Clodd's tastes and pursuits, I found it a little difficult to enter into all his preoccupation with Progress and a distant terrestrial millennium. Before 1914 he liked to hear verses like the following :

The years are slow : the vision tarrieth long ;
And far the end may be ;
But, one by one, the ancient fiends of wrong
Go forth, and leave earth free.

Or :

And so it may be that ages hence, when æons of effort have passed,
We shall come, not blindly impelled, but free, to the orbit of order
at last,

And a finer peace be wrung out of pain than the stars in their
courses show,

Ah me ! but my soul is in sorrow till then, and the feet of the years
are slow.

I suppose that the men of his age found in this sort of speculation a revival of lost hopes and in any case they lived at a time when vague optimism of this kind was less likely to be nipped in the bud by the facts of contemporary history. I mention this trait in Edward Clodd because it is an instance of a religious-minded man inventing a substitute for religion and being apparently content with it. Whatever inspiration he drew from day-dreams of this kind certainly built up a character which overflowed in goodness and gave all his friends life-long memories of happiness at Aldeburgh and elsewhere.¹

Perhaps by way of epilogue and summary I may be allowed to add the words which I read at the Ipswich Crematorium on the 23rd March, 1930 :

'It is an honour and a privilege to be here to-day representing the Rationalist Press Association which Edward Clodd served so long and so well. Under his shrewd and far-seeing guidance it

¹ Mrs. Clodd tells me that during the last years his view of life became entirely stoical and that he did not even subscribe to the rather qualified optimism of Clough.

vastly multiplied and extended the propaganda which he had himself started with his brilliant little books on anthropology. The enormous circulation of all these books has enlightened the English-speaking world beyond all calculation in the last fifty years.

‘His Rationalism has been discussed in the newspapers as if it were a perverted hatred of all religion, such as prevails among the rulers of contemporary Russia. It has been called a “reaction to the harsh Calvinism in which he was brought up.” Nothing could be further from the truth. Edward Clodd numbered among his warmest friends pious and sincere believers in the Christian faith and was on neighbourly relations with his parish priest. He quite understood the type of mind and character which cannot dispense with belief in supernatural aids. He had, no more than Ernest Renan, any quarrel with those who first instructed him in religion. All he wanted was that others should have at least as good, or preferably a better, chance of knowing all that can accurately be known about the universe as a preliminary to forming conclusions about it, and I think I may say that the Association which he supported has done its best to work on these principles.

‘This progressive enlightenment of the English-speaking world and of many others who knew his work through translations is his most outstanding achievement; but the members of the Association who knew him could not fail to love him and to recognise in his life and personality a type of ethical beauty which was but the practical expression of his beliefs. Of his devotion to his family I need not and should not here speak; but his career was a living witness to all those ideals of unfailing integrity, good faith, and wise generosity which are particularly dear to English men and women. Yet he was altogether humble and free from any self-righteous or self-seeking impulses. His gentle wisdom made every allowance for those who fell below his own standards of living, though he would spare no denunciation of sordid and deliberate fraud when it crossed his path. I do not believe that anyone ever had a more understanding or considerate friend than Edward Clodd.

‘Sometimes one might have desired for him the mercifully sudden death of his friend George Whale. Yet the last year or two of his life revealed a real greatness of character. There was something almost like majesty in his presence which defied the humiliation of physical infirmity. Just before I left him for the last time he suddenly touched me and said, “I miss you.” How exactly these simple words express what we, his friends, feel in spite of his great age and failing physical powers. Yet all we can do now is to feel proud that we knew and loved him and to do our best to carry on the tradition of his splendid work. John Stuart Mill has been called the “Saint of Rationalism.” For some of us the word

"Saint" connotes something exotic or esoteric in human character. For myself at least the memory of Edward Clodd's personality and career is more inspiring than the records of hagiology. The strain of his intellectual achievement never chilled the ardour of his affections which hallowed the whole course of his long life. He was the living embodiment of the Pauline words about charity.

"Charity suffereth long and is kind; charity envieth not, charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

E. S. P. HAYNES.

HIS ROOM.

His room is as he left it—stacked on the floor
 Grave legal documents—on the table more
 Loose to hand, or in red-taped bundles tied
 Gaily; and corpulent tomes, all dignified
 In calf, look down with solemn stare
 From dusty shelves:—Prideaux's 'Conveyancer,'
 'The New Death Duty,' Stephen's 'Commentary
 On English Law,' 'Wills,' 'Statutes,' 'Bankruptcy':—
 Vivid or sombre, each expectant stands,
 Waiting the touch of his familiar hands.
 Sturdy and confident, his special chair,
 But recently pushed back, waits with an air
 Of intimacy. His desk awaits him too:
 None but his memoried brain and fingers knew
 Just where each deed, each needful paper, lay
 Among the sprawling heaps—the disarray
 Of ordered forms. On top of all the rest,
 Ready to post, an envelope lies, addressed
 In his own hand, with a bold 'Immediate'
 Across it. How the old life with yesterday's date
 Comes surging back and drowns reality!
 I listen for his step—his voice—his key
 Turned in the lock:—I listen, and the dim,
 Untidy room he loved, waits too for him.

D. S. LEONARD.

THE RAILWAYS OF TO-MORROW.

BY S. T. JAMES.

It is possible, even if improbable, that before very long railways may become as obsolete as the stage coaches. Aircraft, aided by a road-motor fleet, may quite conceivably develop and improve so rapidly as to emphasise altogether too strongly the handicaps and disadvantages of a fixed track. Hence the impression, rather widely held, that figuratively if not literally, there is no such thing as 'to-morrow' for our iron roads.

'To-morrow' is, however, a flexible word. It can be used in speaking of a time less than twenty-four hours distant, or of an era millions of years ahead. More often, perhaps, the figurative use of the word suggests a lapse of about fifty years, no more, for this is as far as most of us can, or dare, look forward. Shall we then still have railways after fifty years, and if so, what will they be like?

Already, there are many changes quietly taking place, whilst others are under serious consideration, and these, to a very great extent, will determine the immediate future of railroading. They may lead to an era of astounding efficiency and prosperity. Or they may fail most miserably.

The locomotive reform problem is perhaps the most intriguing of all, as well as the most urgent. For years, it has been known that the era of the steam-engine was closing; the size of the tunnels and bridges, the construction of the station parapets and sidings and of the engineering works generally, have made impossible the employment of engines large enough to cope efficiently with the growing demands of the traffic department.

The electric engine, used with such striking success in other parts of the world, seems at present to offer insufficient help to British engineers; in such a small country, uniformity of practice would be essential, and already various authorities have definitely committed themselves to different phases of electric traction. In some places, overhead wires are favoured; in others, electric battery engines are running, whilst elsewhere the live-rail is preferred.

The greatest difficulty of all, however, lies in the initial expense

of scrapping existing locomotives, building new ones, and establishing power plant throughout the length and breadth of the land.

It is therefore of great interest and considerable significance to know that an Irish scientist recently invented a method of charging electric battery locomotives in seven to ten minutes, instead of as many hours, as has hitherto been necessary, and much may be heard of this after impending tests upon the Irish railways. Battery locomotives are at the present moment working with great success in India, in spite of the fact that they have to be 'on charge' for approximately the same time as they are worked. If they can be economically adapted to British rail-roading practice, they will undoubtedly be very strongly favoured by the railways of to-morrow.

Equally promising is the Diesel-electric locomotive, where an oil-engine is used to generate electricity with which to drive the wheels. In America and Canada, such engines are already hailed as ideal. A very small locomotive was tested only a few weeks ago upon the Buenos Ayres G.S. Railway—a particularly difficult line, and it hauled a hundred-ton train 775 miles in $20\frac{1}{2}$ hours, an average of $37\frac{1}{2}$ m.p.h. The engine concerned weighs only 62 tons, and was designed for a maximum speed of 47 m.p.h. with small loads. This speed is readily attained and held, apart from signal checks, permanent-way slows, etc. In Canada, another Diesel-electric engine, this time of huge proportions, has broken records by hauling a heavy passenger train (920 tons) from Montreal to Vancouver, 3,000 miles, in 2 days 19 hours, against 4 days 9 hours, the usual schedule. The trip runs across the Rockies, and provides a very severe test.

Diesel-electric engines need neither overhead wire nor live rail, being entirely self-contained units. They can be built to any size, for any kind of work that is desired, so that there is no waste of power such as occurs with steam traction when a gigantic engine has nothing but a small load to take. Small Diesel-electric engines, built in 'units,' can be put together in twos and threes or fours, to make one gigantic engine, controlled and driven by one set of men, operating a 'master-controller.' They are most economical in many ways, for the design incorporates a water boiler into which all waste gases from the oil-engine are diverted, and which acts as a central heating plant for the train, to warm the coaches.

It seems, therefore, to be very probable that upon the railways of to-morrow we shall have locomotives driven, not by steam, but

by a combination of oil-engine and electricity, which is something that even the experts did not consider probable a few years ago. Moreover, instead of seeing upon the lines locomotives of half a hundred designs, some for express service, some for local service, some for minerals, others for goods, for fish, for shunting and so on, we shall see engines built up in units of power and assembled in whatever force the nature of each particular job demands.

The railways of to-morrow will, one imagines, be very much cleaner than those of to-day. A dusty carriage seat that stains a lady's dress, a dirty door handle that spoils a gentleman's gloves, a muddy floor, or an unclean window pane, are abominations still to be found occasionally, whilst the sight of a coach with splashed paintwork, sooted and grimed from previous journeys, has always been far too common.

Lately, however, a new plan has been introduced—that of doing the washing and cleaning automatically. The first set of machinery for this purpose was recently installed at York, and will presently be followed by other sets at Newcastle, Wood Green, Marylebone, Cowlairs, Bridgeton Cross, Craigentinny and other places.

Thousands of strips of cloth dusters, each 2 feet long and 4 inches wide, are fastened together to make an enormous mop. Eight of these mops are arranged vertically, in two rows of four, on either side of a line of railway track. Pipes up above pour upon the mops a continuous stream of water, and electric motors rotate them as carriage after carriage is moved slowly down the line of rails so that every inch of the doors, windows and sides, is rubbed down vigorously. Yet the operation takes less than three minutes per coach, against an average hour occupied by the manual labour method.

To see the automatic cleaner at work is to think of Heath Robinson and his drawings. You have a blurred, fantastic vision of thousands of strips of saturated cloth hitting wood and glass by means of fast whirling blows. But when it is remembered that approximately a million pounds per annum has in the past been paid to carriage cleaners and about £80,000 to the purveyors of carriage cleaning materials, the fantastic appearance will be forgotten, for upon the railways of to-morrow we shall remember that handsome is as handsome does.

Extra cleanliness will not be the only contribution to a more convenient and pleasing form of travel upon the railways of to-

morrow. For instance, the simplification of cross-country journeys, long overdue, will have been accomplished. Our railway superintendents have for a hundred years built their time-tables upon ancient schedules compiled when 'the line' was first opened! There have been additions, cancellations and modifications, certainly, but the same old framework persists year after year. Junctions and changing places remain just as they were when our grandfathers travelled: from the main line you change at A for the Yorkshire branch, at B for the Nottingham branch, or C for the Huntingdonshire branch, and so on. Before very long it will occur to the authorities that a main line train might be scheduled, once in a while, to turn off at A, B or C to give a direct service to towns on the branches! The benefit of the change will then be so quickly and universally acknowledged that a return to the old system will be unthinkable.

And now that road powers have been obtained, what excuse is there for the continued running of slow passenger trains, particularly upon main lines? Sooner or later all local passenger traffic will be put into the railway motor-bus, thus clearing the track for fast trains and expresses. The motors will connect with these fast trains at junctions or big towns, and so give even the rural dweller a better service than he has to-day. Moreover, much will be done towards speeding up the progress of freight trains, which at present are sometimes shunted into a siding every few miles to allow precedence to the passenger trains. Shunting can easily double the cost of the transportation of a train-load of merchandise and has become a very serious evil. It arises largely from the presence of local passenger trains, for the expresses make extensive use of what are known as 'fast' and 'through' lines, and are often allowed for in the time-tables with much greater accuracy than are local trains.

Another advantage of the change will be increased punctuality. Nothing is more damaging to a railway company's prestige than for the trains to be constantly behind time. Yet during busy seasons and at rush hours, the lines of to-day become so congested that delays are bound to arise in the interests of safe working. To reduce the congestion and thereby make railway services a constant model of punctuality will strike a damaging blow at the prospects of road rivals. For who will face the hazards and delays of the road for any long journey when railway reliabilities are uniformly acknowledged?

Many of the small passenger stations, and small goods stations, existing to-day will not be found upon the railways of to-morrow. Mere depôts, inexpensive in upkeep and with very tiny staffs, will replace them. Goods and parcels will be collected and distributed by motor-vehicle from the nearest junction or large town, as with passengers.

We shall have done, too, with the disproportionate difference between first- and third-class travel. First-class seats are worth more than thirds, but they are not worth so much more as is demanded for them. Upon the railways of to-morrow the difference in price will be less pronounced and many of us who now demand 'third return' will ask for 'first return,' very much to the advantage of the railway finances, one imagines. And just as it is possible to-day to send a letter or a parcel through the post to any part of England, charged upon weight alone, so will it be possible to send parcels and packages upon the railways of to-morrow. The plan will, indeed, be extended to passenger-travel—in a modified form at first. There will be a fare of, say, 6*d.* for journeys up to 10 miles, 1*s.* up to 25 miles, 2*s.* to 50 miles, and so on. In the neighbourhood of many big towns 'zone ticket' arrangements of an almost identical nature have been popular for years, and the extension of a system that has hitherto proved so successful is merely a matter of common sense.

The enormous possibilities of radio in connection with railways, sadly neglected to-day, will most certainly be explored most fully by the railways of to-morrow. All the important trains will be equipped with receiving sets, including both ear-phones and loud speakers. Probably there will be four or five railway broadcasting stations, such as have been established in Canada, at Moreton, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, and Saskatoon, each making a special and appropriate feature of items such as 'travel stories.'

Quite apart from the boon conferred upon travellers, a railway wireless scheme will have other important advantages. It will bring the management into prompt and personal touch with a very scattered staff; whilst news of special dangers, difficulties or needs, will be made known far more promptly than at present.

In parts of the United States, serious trouble is sometimes experienced owing to the tremendous storms and gales cutting off communication with isolated regions. Ordinary methods of controlling train movements, and of signalling, are thrown out of

gear, and become unreliable; all movements become attended by risk and uncertainty, and perhaps there is a long stoppage of all services.

Until the advent of radio, periodical troubles of this sort were considered inevitable. To-day, there is an arrangement in force whereby at times of emergency, news of train movements, of floods, of damage to the line or to bridges, are broadcast by the train controller, and relayed by a number of amateur broadcasters. Undoubtedly the plan has saved many lives, and when it is developed in this country, upon the railways of to-morrow, a great forward step will have been taken.

Still another aspect of radio's promised usefulness, has been glimpsed by the railway-traveller in Germany. After experiments lasting six years, a method of equipping trains with wireless has been perfected. On the Hamburg to Berlin line, it is possible for a traveller to ring up any German telephone exchange from the train, getting into conversation with a friend or relative just as if he were in the station-telephone box. Similarly, it is possible for him to be called up by a friend as his train tears through the country at sixty miles an hour.

The possibilities of using wireless advantageously, are greater in our own country than at any other part of the world. At no time nor place are our railway trains beyond easy reach of at least one broadcasting station. The smallness and compactness of our systems are all in favour of useful radio results.

Not a day passes without thousands of circulars being sent out from Railway Headquarters to as many different stations and junctions. These circulars are of no permanent value, but merely distribute railway news from day to day. They are just the equivalent of a newspaper, and with the passing of a few hours, their usefulness is gone for ever. Scores of clerks are kept at work, preparing, addressing and despatching these circulars. Harassed guards and porters look after them on the trains as they are carried for distribution. Yet invariably some few amongst the thousands get lost, and so someone goes uninformed after all. On the railways of to-morrow all such circulars will be broadcast by wireless at fixed hours. Similarly the news of special trains, of alterations in time-tables, of engine breakdowns, and of accidents, will often be usefully and quickly spread by wireless rather than by the telegraph needle.

One of the most useful amongst modern railway methods is

that of a train control, whereby an official seated in some central office orders the movements of all sorts of trains for scores of miles around. He is in charge of signalmen, enginemen, guards and stationmasters—and his presence saves many a muddle and probably many an accident, besides enabling more trains to be on the lines and more speed to be made without sacrifice of safety.

At present, the Train Controller needs a private telephone to each station, junction, or signal-box within his area. To the man in charge he gives his instructions and from each he receives reports of passing trains. Various devices are used whereby the Controller can speak to several stations or boxes at the same time, which is just a clumsy way of broadcasting instructions. On the railways of to-morrow the Controller will speak simultaneously to the whole of his subordinates by means of radio, to the advantage of all.

It may, indeed, become possible to instal a receiving set on the footplate of each express locomotive so that the driver can receive continual information about the trains before and behind him, and about the condition of the lines ahead, thus becoming independent of the present-day semaphore signals. This is, however, a possibility rather than a probability. Much more likely is the provision of loud speakers in place of station time-tables.

These will be tuned so as to articulate very clearly and distinctly, and very deliberately. The 'pitch' will rise above all other station noises, so that every word becomes clearly audible. Scores of inquiries that now delay and hinder the station officials will thus be obviated.

On the railways of to-morrow, steel sleepers will predominate, and the permanent way will be made not only more comfortable and durable, but more reliable. Even to-day our railways boast the best kept track in the world, but ways and means from which great improvements are expected, are already under consideration and experiment.

During a hundred years, the method of laying or renewing our railway track has altered little. Until this year, the procedure has always been to take up by manual labour the old rails, chairs, and sleepers, substituting, also by hand, the new. A big rally of platelayers was called on each occasion, as many as a hundred men being needed for each mile of line. The biggest jobs were always done on a Sunday, because of the curtailed train service. Many days in advance of the actual relaying, the new sleepers and

rails, together with truck-loads of ballast and tools, were laid out alongside the old lines, each new article being placed exactly opposite the one it was shortly to replace. Then, upon the appointed day, a hundred platelayers would relay not more than a mile and sometimes, if the lines were busy, not more than 700 yards of track in twelve hours! This slow and painful toil cost an average of £3,000 to £4,000 per mile.

There has now been introduced from Ireland a machine which will pick up the old track in sections, and put down the new lines ready for use. The machine is necessarily of gigantic proportions, but from the time it arrives on the job not more than five minutes need elapse before the first piece of the old track is lifted bodily to a waiting truck—sleepers, chairs, rails, all together just as they were lying. Every hour, 240 yards of line can be renewed without perspiration. Labour costs are reduced by 40 per cent. and the fact that the machine works by night as efficiently as by day enables the engineers to cut down considerably the inconvenience of delayed trains.

To see the track-layer at work is impressive. Behind the engine is a huge cantilever wagon over which there projects horizontally the equivalent of a crane jib, designed to lower into position upon the ballast each section of the new lines. These new lines are seen loaded upon perhaps half a dozen huge trucks coming up behind—sleepers, keys, rails, chairs all fastened securely into position ready for use!

In the days to come we shall see a host of these vast machines at work throughout the length and breadth of the country. They will become as familiar as cheap excursion trains, and as useful, for instead of the renewal of the rails being an expensive, lengthy and disorganising job to be undertaken only when inevitable, it will become simple, cheap and swift, to be tackled at more frequent periods, with corresponding gain of comfort and safety.

Science will, indeed, play an ever-increasing part in ministering to the safety and comfort of the railways of to-morrow, in minor as well as major details. More and more use will be made, for instance, of the Hallade Track Register and companion devices.

To-day the Hallade Register may occasionally be seen travelling in a reserved compartment, where it accurately records the time and place of any and every bump or jolt that the train experiences from start to finish of the journey. It also records the nature of the jolt so as to make easy location and identification of the cause.

Three types of jolt are commonly experienced by railway travellers; the 'to and fro' jerks, as when a train is starting or stopping, the 'side to side' jerks, often regarded as a sign of high speed, and the 'ups and downs,' which cause you to enquire whether or no the carriage possesses springs.

The Hallade Register has three arms, each recording one, and only one, of these types of jolt. By an ingenious arrangement of springs and balances, every arm is made sensitive only to its own particular business. The 'to and fro' arm takes no notice whatever of 'side to side' or 'up and down' sensations.

The mechanism consists of a drum of white paper, unrolled steadily by clockwork. Upon the paper rest the three recording arms, each drawing a line whose length constantly varies according to the strength of the sensation it is at that moment feeling.

Two attendants travel with the Hallade Register. One of them, protected by goggles, leans from the carriage window, holding the end of a bulb, which he presses as the train runs by each quarter-mile post. Each pressure makes a mark upon the paper of the Register: at a mile-post, two marks are made, and at a station, three marks.

The second attendant sits against the machine, writing against the bulb-marks the name of the station or the 'mileage' of the mile posts, as called out to him by his be-goggled colleague.

And at the end of the trip, a glance at the Register shows accurately every single point at which the track is not quite what it should be. It indicates, too, the probable nature of the defects; some faults are known to cause side-to-side movements, others ups and downs, and so on. Thereupon the engineer is advised, and a gang of platelayers set to work at the indicated spots.

Another way in which science will come to the aid of our railways will be seen in the testing of the wheels, axles and springs, where X-rays are to be used in seeking for those hidden defects which in the past have only revealed themselves under the strain of emergency, often with terrifying results. Electric magnets are to be used, too, and by their aid flaws come to light which even the microscope fails to detect. Very weird and wonderful are the testing instruments that are being brought increasingly into railway practice, and upon to-morrow's railways many things that have been called in the past 'an act of God,' will no longer be so described.

It is likely that mechanical apparatus will not only assist, but may even replace, fog signalmen upon the railways of to-morrow. In certain parts of the country, notably within the Metropolitan area and upon the electric railways, successful and significant experiments have already been tried. The principle of fog-signalling is that an explosive detonator shall be fastened upon the railway line just beneath each signal that stands at danger. The engine driver cannot see the signal, but the wheels of his train will explode the detonator, thereby giving audible instead of ocular warning of danger.

The duty of a fogman is to fix the detonator, and to remove it whenever the signal falls, so that then the train may pass without an explosion.

Peering upwards through the fog, the fogman strains his eyes and ears for any symptoms of change in the signals above. In the future he will, for so long as he is permitted to survive, sit in his cabin, warmed by a brazier, surveying miniature signal arms which rise and fall in conjunction with the bigger signals outside.

Eventually, however, mechanical fogmen will prevail—powerful electric signal-lights, so fixed as to throw their beams straight into the face of the enginemmen. Sufficient power will be used to penetrate even the thickest of fogs, and thus the message of the signalman will, in effect, be repeated and magnified so that it cannot possibly escape observation.

Where electric power is not available the 'Aga' fog-signalman may be used. The Aga is a flashlight, burning acetylene gas, and gives 200 flashes per minute. It shines through a red or green lens, automatically connected with the semaphore signal above.

In an era of comparative prosperity, thirty years ago, many gentlemen possessing little talent but great influence managed to secure for themselves or their protégés highly salaried railway posts as Assistant Managers and Assistant Superintendents. These posts were specially created to oblige the wire-pullers—there never was and never has been sufficient commercial justification for them. Once started, the posts have been perpetuated to this day—and are still filled uneconomically. Upon the railways of to-morrow, huge sums of money will be saved in this direction: simplicity of control and management are already strongly felt to be desirable.

For instance, the idea of having in any one town separate 'Agents' working independently for 'Goods,' 'Passenger' and

'Traffic' departments, is uneconomical and foolish. Yet such separate agencies are the rule rather than the exception to-day! How much better and cheaper it will be to have one agent per town, instead of two or three—a man really an agent and truly in charge. Gone will be the irritating references from one party to another, so common to inquirers nowadays. Gone, too, will be the little jealousies, squabbles and differences that so frequently hinder good railway working at large and important centres.

Finally, the railways of to-morrow may be very largely single lines. Already it is generally agreed in official circles that single lines can be worked more economically and if anything more safely, than double ones. Without a doubt, there are many hundreds of miles of double track that would be more useful as single track. Little by little the change will be made, until presently single track is a common instead of an uncommon feature of railroading. Scientific methods of signalling and controlling trains, together with automatic methods of preventing delays and accidents, will make the working of those single lines the simplest and easiest of matters. Those of us who have been long accustomed to regard the single line of track as a dangerous anomaly of railroading, will have to revise our views.

To travel on the railways of to-morrow will be to travel cheaply, comfortably, conveniently, scientifically and safely. On the railways of to-day, these features are sometimes spasmodic, intermittent and partial. Each succeeding month, however, is bringing us definitely nearer to the ideal, and the time is not far distant when the railways of 'to-morrow' will be the railways of 'to-day.'

THE SOLDIER.

'YOU'RE right, sir. I'm an old soldier. You saw it in the set of my shoulders! Ye did! Well, to think of that now! An' you've been a soldier yourself. Sure, couldn't I see it! Not a regular. What of it? Doesn't the whole world know that the regular army was destroyed before the heaviest fightin' started? My Regiment. The Royal South Irish Fusiliers, sir—that was. First Battalion an' Second. I'm on my way now to pay my respects to the Colonel, sir. Maybe ye knew him. Colonel O'Halloran-Tracey. A fine man an' a true Irishman, though a Protestant. Sure the Protestants are fine, upstandin' people, your honour. Don't I know it? An' generous as the June day is long an' warm-hearted, too.

Do I live in this country? I do not. I'm livin' in Ireland this minute, though I'm doubtin' if I'll ever have strength of mind to go back there now. Ireland's no place for an old South Irish Fusilier, not these days. It was the Colonel told me that seven years ago when they burnt down the big house. He said that Ireland was the one country in the world worth livin' in, but for its haythen an' bloodthirsty inhabitants, so he crossed the Irish Sea an' settled himself here, in England, broken-hearted, not so much on account of his home bein' burnt as because they took an' disbanded the South Irish, along with the other Irish Reg'ments. I'm tellin' ye no lies, yer honour, when I say he shed tears the day they marched the colours of the South Irish through the streets of Windsor to the Castle an' the band of the Grenadier Guards playin' the Regimental march, *Garry Owen*, for the last time. By God! I shed tears myself, what with that old tune an' the sight of all them flags an' the bayonets an' the beer I was after takin' to keep up my courage.

An' after that, sir, there was no place for the like of us, the Colonel an' me, anywhere. We were exiles—men without country. We spent all our lives in the South Irish an' they disbanded us. The meanest trick that ever was played on the Irish. Yes, sir, beggin' your pardon, it's the truth. An' now—where do we belong? Nowhere.

In the bad old days, sir, before we won our freedom on the field of battle, and to hear them I.R.A. heroes talkin' ye'd think the first Battle of Ypres was a mere parade by comparison, in the bad old days, yer honour, when we were groanin' under the heel of the Saxon oppressor an' cryin' to High Heaven an' all the Holy Saints for help, the country was over-run by soldiers an'—an' by God! there was grand doin's everywhere, from Galway to Kinsale, an' Cork to the Curragh, an' we were happy an' contented an' makin' big money out of the troops an' raisin' hell generally. But now, now we're free an' there's no one to raise hell with except the Republicans, poor weak-witted creatures, an' Ireland's a desolate wilderness. The soldiers are gone. Cork Barracks—so ye knew Cork Barracks did you, your honour! when the Lincolns an' King's Liverpools were there—ah! many's the time I'm after hearin' the old *Lincolnshire Poacher* an' *Here's to the Maiden* played by the massed bands as they went by in column of companies—Cork Barracks is like Passchendaele in nineteen-seventeen, the abomination of desolation. I was there one evenin' a month ago an' I went the round of the old place an' I axed myself was it possible that once, not so many years past, the fifes an' drums of the South Irish would be playin' *Garry Owen* in the big square at Retreat, the same as they played it that time we marched over the bridge into Cologne when the war ended.

Was I in the war? Yer honour's makin' fun of me! Wasn't I at Mons? Wasn't I wounded three times an' every time didn't I go back to the Battalion the minute I could blarney the doctors into gettin' rid of me? It's the truth I'm tellin' ye, sir. The Colonel said to me once: "Mooney, you're out of this business for keeps. I'm sorry to lose you. But that wound of yours, cherish it. You're a dam' fine soldier an' it's saved your life." Yes, sir, he said that to me, he did. By God! I was back inside the month an' he near dumfounded at seein' me. "What are you doin' here?" he ses. "Why aren't you in Ireland drillin' recruits?" Barrin' there wasn't any recruits to drill, on account what them Sinn Feiners had spread abroad would happen to them jinin' the South Irish, is it likely I'd be home when the Battalion was fightin' the Germans an' annihilatin' the Prussian Guard? My first duty was not to myself, the way I looked at it, but to the South Irish an' Colonel O'Halloran-Tracey. A grand man, he was, too. A fine soldier. It was him won the war for the British Army, single-handed.

How was that? Well, I'll tell you. To begin with, it was through Colonel O'Halloran-Tracey, an' no one else, that I ever become a soldier at all. His father was old Major O'Halloran-Tracey, sir, that had the big house at Craigieskeddie an' the pack of fox hounds when I was a young lad. Sure I knew him well. There was a good job waitin' for me in the stables, if I wanted it, but I got into bad company, an' what with one thing an' another fell foul of the Sarjint of the Royal Irish Constabulary, Sarjint Rafferty, a man so full of dignity an' bile he wasn't able to button his own tunic without his wife helpin' him. He threatened to put me in jail if I wasn't mendin' my ways—ah! sure it wasn't annythin' at all I did to rile him—he had it in for me an' to frighten the poor creature I sent him a letter tellin' him to beware of his life an' it marked with a skull an' cross-bones and a coffin, by way of a joke. The unfortunate part of the matter was that I couldn't disguise me handwritin'—or didn't—an' the night after the letter reached him his wife's youngest brother who knew what I was after doin' an' wanted to serve me a dirty trick posted himself behind a stone wall an' when the Sarjint was passin' on his way home put a charge of buckshot into him, with the consequence that I, who knew nothin' about it, had to take to me heels early next mornin'.

Young Mr. O'Halloran-Tracey, of the South Irish Fusiliers, who was home on leave for the shootin', found me hidin' out in the hills an' me half-starved. "Well, Pat," ses he, "an' what's this I'm hearin' of you tryin' to murder Sarjint Rafferty?"

"It's not true, sir," ses I, an' I explained.

"You're a dam' Fenian," ses he.

"I am," I ses.

"I've a dam' good mind," ses he, "to hand you over to the Constabulary."

"You wouldn't," I ses. "Will you try an' get me across to America?" ses I, bold as brass.

"I will not," ses he. "What harm has America done? You need tamin' an' breakin'. You need a job that will keep you busy. You're too good a lad to spend your life shootin' the R.I.C. You're goin' to jine the Army."

"I am not," I ses.

"You are," ses he.

"Have it your own way," I ses.

"You'll jine the Army," he ses. "You'll jine the Royal

South Irish Fusiliers an' serve Her Majesty the Queen." The old lady was alive in them days, of course.

"What about Sarjint Rafferty?" ses I, an' by now him an' me was settin' side by side in the heather eatin' his lunch an' me starvin' for want of food. "He'll have my blood."

"I'd like to see him," ses Mr. O'Halloran-Tracey. "I'll have you know, Patrick Mooney, that once you're a Royal South Irish Fusilier no man's goin' to lay hand on you. Leave it to me. Are ye on?" ses he.

"I am," ses I. "Will there be fightin'?"

"There will," he ses. An' by God! whether he knew it or not, he spoke the truth.

"Well, yer honour, I jined the South Irish. I done my six months at the Reg'mental Depot an' after that was transferred to the First Battalion at Aldershot. An' there I met Mr. O'Halloran-Tracey, a lieutenant in them days, an' Corporal Rafferty, Sarjint Rafferty's brother, a long-nosed, foxy-faced fella who addressed himself to me the first day when I come off parade.

"Your name's Mooney?" ses he.

"It is," I ses. "An' your name's Rafferty. You're Jim Rafferty's brother. How are ye?" ses I.

"Keep your *how are ye's* to yourself," he ses. "I'm a Corporal an' you're a private. But," ses he, "you listen to me. I know you. You're the man that hid the far side of a wall an' shot my brother in the back."

"That's a dam' lie," I ses, "an' you're a dam' liar."

"You speak like that to me, Mooney," he ses, "an' I'll have you up in the orderly room before the Commandin' Officer for insolence to an N.C.O. I'm warnin' ye. Mind what you're about. They're after writin' to me from Craigieskeddie to tell me that Mr. O'Halloran-Tracey's yer friend. That makes no difference to me. You jined the Army to escape my brother. Well an' good, but ye won't escape me." With that he walked away from me an' never so much as noticed me after for months an' months.

It's queer how a boy—I was eighteen at the time, yer honour—will make just one mistake an' that mistake, or the result of it, will follow him all his life. The mistake I made was in lettin' Corporal Rafferty see what I thought of him. An' that, sir, is why you see me to-day, the way I am, a drunken old soldier, with all I have in the world on me. Though I didn't know it at the time, Corporal Rafferty an' I was to be enemies from then on,

for the rest of our lives. If I was to see him now, comin' along the highroad yonder I'd get to me old feet, I would, an' I'd ask him would he care to settle our quarrel once more, or was he afraid of me still. Enemies we were from then on.

Not that I lost anny sleep over Corporal Rafferty. Could he hurt me? He could not. An' I settled down to bein' a soldier to the manner born. A gran' life it was, too. So I thought. So I think. Plenty to eat an' drink an' not too much hard work an' then after we left Aldershot there was foreign parts to visit an' wars on top of everythin' else. Yes, sir, I seen a deal of mixed fightin' in my time.

South Africa! Of course. Wasn't I at Colenso an' Spion Kop? Wasn't I one of those that reached the stone wall at Pieter's Hill? An' didn't I march into Ladysmith with the relievin' force? I did so. An' I come out of the campaign with a wound an' the D.C.M. I fought on the North-West Frontier of India, too, against the Pathans in nineteen hundred an' eight an' again I was wounded. An' then I fought in the great war that's past this ten years. That's the soldierin' I done with the South Irish, yer honour, an' now they're gone. You won't hear their fifes an' drums, playin' *Garry Owen* or *Brian Boru*, or their bagpipes anny more. A fine Regiment, yer honour. The best shootin', the hardest drinkin', the worst behaved Regiment in the British Army, an' when it came to a fight, sir, unbelievable! An' they're after disbandin' them! Think of it! What's a boy over in Ireland to do with himself now, a fine, strong lad with no wish to serve in a shop or work on a farm! Jine the Free State Army, is it? Don't make me smile, sir! But they got no use for us fellas these days. They don't like us. It's the truth. An' why? Because we served in the South Irish.

They tell me there's to be no more wars, by Act of Parliament, or somethin'. Is that true? Ah, well, knowin' the Irish, I take leave to doubt it. War's bad, of course, but I'd as soon be stood up an' shot at by Prussian Guardsmen as be hounded around because I fought in the Royal South Irish Fusiliers an' was one of them that helped win the war with Colonel O'Halloran-Tracey. It's a fact, sir. An' no one cares. No one. Or they'd not be seein' a poor old soldier starve an' they not raisin' a hand to help him!

I did twelve years with the South Irish, the happiest years of my life an' the bitterest. I had my Corporal's stripes by the

time my seven years was up an' I re-engaged for another five. I'd hopes of bein' a Sarjint an' extendin' my time an' God knows what else. It was the drink got me. The drink an' Sarjint Rafferty's brother. I don't know how it is, lookin' back, but there's some men that you hate at sight, an' try as you may you can see no good in them. Rafferty was one of them. A hard, mean man. He'd do you a dirty trick, he would, as soon as look at you. From the first he was my enemy, without concealin' it. He said it was for the sake of his brother he'd hound me down an' make my life miserable. That was it, maybe, at first, but to'rds the latter end it was his dislike of myself that was his guidin' motive in life. I'll tell ye a great truth, yer honour, an' that is, a man will forgive you, to an extent, if when he tries to do you an injury you treat him as someone to be feared: he'll have a sneakin' respect for you, but if you laugh at him as I laughed at Rafferty whenever I saw him, he'll hate you to your dyin' day, or his. Corporal Rafferty was Sarjint Rafferty when I got my two stripes. He was a fine figure of a man, broad an' well set-up, with a little red mustache on him waxed in the way that ye saw before the war when the old Army went clean-shaven an' we took off our mustaches to see what like of men we were underneath. Yes, he was a fine-lookin' man, Ned Rafferty, an' a good fella with all, till ye got to know him, an' he had two great ambitions in life: one was to become a Quartermaster-Sarjint an' feather his nest an' retire on pension with money put by, the other was to lose me my stripes. I saved him the trouble by losin' them all by myself.

That first day he spoke to me I knew what he was. I studied him. His brother, the Sarjint in the R.I.C., was a gentleman alongside him. He fought ye, open an' aboveboard, but Foxey Rafferty of the South Irish, by God! he'd get you by anny mean, underhand way he could, so long as he wasn't found out. He hated me an' he did all he could to hinder me an' stand in my way an' keep me from goin' ahead. He went so far as to accuse me, behind my back, of carryin' tales to Captain O'Halloran-Tracey an' so on to curry favour an' get me my third stripe. Some men are like that, yer honour. It's jealousy at the bottom of it, always.

Annyway, I swallowed me anger an' kep' me temper an' said nothin'. But I swore solemn that as soon as I got my third stripe an' me an' Rafferty was of equal rank I'd go to him an' I'd say:

"Rafferty, let you an' me go for a walk with a couple of other Sarjints an' settle our difference like gentlemen."

You understand, yer honour. A private can't hit a lance-corporal, an' a lance-corporal can't hit a corporal, an' so on, all the way up, jus' as a Colonel can't hit a General, an' though I never heard of one wantin' to, from what I seen in France there's many had ample justification. Well, that was me plan, annyway. I was young in them days an' unthinkin' an' I hadn't reckoned on Rafferty's cunnin' an' the heat of the Indian sun an' it on top of too much whisky.

In due course, yer honour, in the year nineteen hundred an' six, bein' as smart a Corporal as ye'd find in the British Army, I got my third stripe an' there I was, a Sarjint at last. Sarjint Mooney. I got me third stripe an' lost it within six months. My own fault, too.

There was a girl. Need I tell ye that, yer honour. Annie MacGinty, the daughter of the Regimental-Sarjint-Major. I was crazy after her. I'd marry her the minute she'd have me. An' she would have me, as soon as I jined the Sarjints' Mess. That was because of her father, old Dan MacGinty, the R.S.M., who knew nothin' of what was planned. But he knew fast enough two, three months after I got my promotion when Rafferty went to him behind our backs an' told him a string of lies about me an' Annie, an' we tryin' to find courage to tell him we was engaged to be married.

What was that, sir? Was Rafferty in love with Annie! He was not. He was in love with no one. He was a married man an' his wife ruled him an' kept him under her thumb, knowin' what sort of man she was after marryin'. Rafferty went to the R.S.M. an' told him lies an' that same day Annie was packed off to Bombay on her way home to Ireland. I was on guard duty an' didn't know of it till next afternoon when Rafferty axed me in the Sarjints' Mess was I goin' to meet Annie that evenin'. I said: "What the hell has it got to do with you?" First he looked ugly, an' then he smiled. "Nothin'," ses he. "Nothin' at all." "Well," I ses, "you'll oblige me by mindin' your own business." "I meant to be friendly," ses he, lyin'.

Cuttin' a long story short, yer honour, Annie was not at the place where she said she would meet me. I waited an' waited, an' then after a while I was worried an' I thought to myself I'd take the bull by the horns an' talk to the R.S.M. an' ax for the

hand of his daughter. It was the R.S.M. did the talkin'. He told me jist what he thought of me. I'd never see Annie again. He'd take good care of that. He knew what like of man I was. He knew why I'd left Ireland, an' so on. He knew my reputation. Annie would have nothin' more to do with me. He gave me no reasons. He wouldn't listen to argument. An' that was the end of it.

I was hot-headed in them days, yer honour. I told the R.S.M. he could go to hell. I said his daughter could go there, too. I flung out the room an' then—then, by God! I got so drunk, so dam' crazy, fightin' drunk it took seven men to take me to the guard-room. That was the beginnin' of the end. Next mornin' I was up before the Company Commander, Captain O'Halloran-Tracey. He jist said: "I'm sorry, Mooney. I'm disappointed," an' put me back to go before the Commandin' Officer, with the result that I lost my stripes an' became a private again.

An' then, then Rafferty met me an' stood, grinnin' at me, an' he ses, ses he:

"Well, Private Mooney, what's the meanin' of this?"

"The meanin' is, ye dam' ugly divil," ses I, "that if ye don't keep out o' my sight, I'll hammer that dam' ugly face of yours till I make ye look so your own mother won't know you from a ham bone."

"Lay one finger on me," he ses, "an' see what happens." I caught hold of him an' ses I:

"Why, by damn! ye think I'm afraid what will happen!"

He wrenched himself free an' made off, white in the face. I called after him:

"Sarjint, I'm waitin'. I'll git ye. You understand!" An' by God! yer honour, I meant it. I meant it. Though by the same token I little knew it was him that was after tellin' the R.S.M. them dam' outrageous lies about me so that Annie was sent home, broken-hearted. If I had, if I had known, yer honour, nothin' would have saved Rafferty. I'd have shot him dead.

I didn't see him again, not for many years. He went sick that same day I'm talkin' about with a touch of the sun. He bamboozled the M.O. He lied himself into hospital. An' then he got himself sent home on account of his health—I have to smile to think of it—an' was transferred to the Second Battalion at the Curragh, Kildare, an' his life was saved.

Within the year Annie was married in Ireland an' I went

downhill fast. I drank to drown my sorrows. I succeeded. I got over the shock of losin' a worthless girl—worthless because she was married to someone else—an' I didn't care one way or another. I was a private, without either responsibility or ambition, an' I was happy once more. Yes, yer honour, I was happy. An' then with little more than a year to go in the Army, I went up to the frontier with the Battalion to fight the Mohmands an' was laid out with a Martini bullet in my foot. Captain O'Halloran-Tracey an' I hadn't been friends a long while, but he come to me then an' he ses: "Pat, you must get well an' come back to the Battalion quick." When I did get back to the Battalion, however, he was gone. He was wounded the same as I was an' on top of the wound there was the cholera he caught like many another. He didn't die in spite of the doctors, but he went home, a sick man.

Yer honour, I told you I'd no ambition. That's true. I hadn't. Not until the time came when I was to go home to take my discharge, time-expired, a private still with three medals an' the D.C.M. an' two wounds an' a thirst that's not been quenched to this day. The old Regimental-Sarjint-Major was goin' home on the same transport. He hadn't spoken to me for three years, not since I got drunk an account of losin' his daughter, but the day before we were due in Southampton he met me on deck an' he ses:

"How old are you, Mooney?"

"Jist thirty," I ses.

"A young man yet," ses he; "try an' make some good use of the rest of your life or it will be too late."

"Ah! what are you talkin' about?" ses I. "Where's Annie these days? Is she happy?"

"No," he ses. "Her husband's dead."

"Dead!" I ses.

"Yes," ses he, "dead." An' then he ses: "Mooney, I ax your pardon. I was a fool when I believed the lies Sarjint Rafferty said about you."

"Rafferty!" I ses. "Rafferty! By God! an' I didn't know." An' then I ses: "The minute I get home I'll go see Annie an' say is there anny hope."

"You'll not see her," ses the R.S.M., "an' me not under the sod. When I sent Annie home," he ses, "I believed what Rafferty said. I was wrong. You were no better an' no worse than any other Sarjint in the South Irish. But now," he ses, "I'd rather

my right hand was chopped off than see her married to you. Because," he ses, "whatever you were in them days three years ago, Mooney, you're a dam', drunken blackguard now."

That was in the year nineteen hundred an' nine. I was time-expired. A civilian. Annie had gone out of my life. So had Rafferty. When I saw him I'd kill him. It's the truth. I'd kill him. That's what I thought. Did I try an' see Annie? I did. She was livin', then, at Kinsale, with her father an' mother. They wouldn't let me say a word to her alone. They didn't trust me out of their sight. Disregardin' black looks, I ses to her:

"Annie," ses I, "will ye marry me?" She began to cry.

"No, Patrick," she ses, "I can't. I love you," she ses, "an' I always will, but one husband who drinks is enough. I won't marry you." She meant what she said. I could see it. Nobody spoke. An' so I ses:

"Good afternoon, m'am. I wish you all happiness," an' I went away. That was the end of my romance. An' all through that Rafferty. Ah, well! it's years ago now, so where's the good of regret.

I went home to Craigieskeddie an' stayed awhile with my brother who was head groom to Major O'Halloran-Tracey, father of my officer. I met Sarjint Rafferty of the R.I.C. an' I ses:

"Rafferty," I ses, "I'm out of the Army."

"That's good for the Army," ses he.

"Yes," I ses, "an' bad for you an' the other Raffertys. Listen, I've no wish to have a man's blood on my hands, not even a Rafferty's, an' so I'm tellin' ye, warn your brother that if he sets foot in Ireland an' I get to hear of it I'll kill him."

"I'll get you for that," ses he. "Utterin' threats of a murderous nature is ag'in' the law." I laughed at him.

"Produce your witnesses," ses I. "Your word against mine, Rafferty. I'm a Royal South Irish Fusilier, ye dam' polisman, an' I'll give you the lie to your face." I had him there.

It's a terrible thing for a man to spend twelve years of his life in the Army, yer honour, an' then find himself a civilian, an' without anny taste for work, an' a likin' for liquor. What was I goin' to do? What could I do? Shoot, dhrill, march an' fight. I was a soldier. For two, three years I lived in Cork, workin' first at one thing, then another. An' then by degrees, havin' a grievance ag'in' the world in general an' the Raffertys in particular,

I got myself mixed up with the Sinn Feiners. There was to be fightin', I'd be in it. In nineteen-thirteen I went to Dublin. An' there—why, cripes! I was happy. There was business afoot. Secrets. Conspiracies. Pass words. I was in the thick of it, waitin'. You understand. Waitin' for the movement that was to free Ireland at last. Home Rule wasn't enough. We'd be fightin' the Ulstermen first an' they armin' an' then after we'd bate them we'd be drivin' the Saxon into the sea. Great days, they was. I could tell ye stories of gun-runnin' to Howth, yer honour, that would delight the heart of you. It's fifteen years ago now an' I'm gettin' an old man but it seems like yesterday. An old man, did ye say? Yer honour, I'm fifty. I might be seventy the way I feel. When I look in the glass it's a hundred. That's what life's done to me, life an' that Rafferty.

Ah, well! what odds? A fella don't gain by lookin' back an' repinin'. I lost my stripes, an' I lost Annie, an' I lost everythin' that a man sets store by, an' the South Irish was disbanded, yet I can look the world in the face an' smile at my troubles, an' that's somethin' on the credit side of the balance.

Well, yer honour, I'm talkin' about nineteen-fourteen now, with the stage all set for us an' the Ulstermen fightin' like—like Kilkenny cats. A gran' fight it would be, too. An' then what should happen but that fat blow-fly, the Kaiser, over in Germany gets on to his hind legs an' ses: "Fellas, we'll have a war. Let's fight!" The poor madman! I was in it from the very first. As soon as I heard what was ahead I dropped the business in hand. I didn't listen to the boys but was off hot-foot—where do you think? Back to the South Irish! It's the truth. The Second Battalion was in Aldershot. Not my Battalion, not the old Battalion that I was with in South Africa, an' India, but the Second. An' Captain O'Halloran-Tracey was with them.

After his wound on the frontier an' the cholera he came home an' was seconded, as the sayin' goes, to a staff appointment in England, an' then when war threatened was posted back to the other Battalion. I heard he was there an' went to his quarters. He was glad to see me.

"You old divil," he ses, "what brings you here?"

"Sir," ses I, "the South Irish will be fightin'. It isn't right they should take the field without reinforcements."

"Meanin'?" he ses.

"Myself," ses I. "The best fighter they got."

"Go back to Irelan', Mooney," he ses, "an' jine one of the wartime Battalions they'll be formin'."

"I will not," I ses. "I'm a regular. Yer honour, I'd rather jine an English Regiment an' have a smack at the Germans than wait and maybe see nothin' but garrison duty at Cork or Bere Island. What's more," I ses, "look at the young boys you got. You need a stiffenin' of old soldiers to teach them their job. Fit me out with a uniform an' equipment an' you'll never regret it."

But he shakes his head.

"It's no good, Mooney," he ses, "you're time-expired. You can't come."

"I'll come," ses I, "if I have to walk every foot of the way." He raises no further objections.

"All right," he ses. "Leave it to me. I'll see the Colonel an' do what I can." An' so when the Second South Irish left Aldershot with the Expeditionary Force I was with them, me an' me medal ribbons an' me experience an' me thirst.

What was that, yer honour? Rafferty! Sure he was. Rafferty was Quartermaster-Sarjint of D Company, as full of pomp an' importance as the Pope of Rome an' the parish priest of Craigie-skeddie. We met as was natural, an' he tried to avoid me.

"No so fast," I ses. "Rafferty, I'm wishful to fight in this war that's ahead of us, an' so I'm takin' no chances of bein' put under arrest for assaultin' a warrant officer, but it was you told them lies about me an' Annie MacGinty. I'll not forget."

The man was afraid. I could see it.

"You'd better take care," he ses.

"I will," ses I. "But I'm warnin' ye. The time will come when you an' me will settle this matter, rank or no rank. Mebbe I'll get me promotion all over again, an' if I do——" He laughed in me face.

"Promotion," ses he. "Since when are they promotin' the dregs of Dublin quays?"

Ah, well! the war's old history now an' the men what was in it are old men. I seen all the fightin' there was to see. Mons an' the Marne an' Ypres an' the rest of them. I was wounded three times, jist as I said, an' each time I come back to the old Second Battalion. Colonel O'Halloran-Tracey got command in the spring of nineteen-fifteen an' kept it till the April of nineteen-eighteen, the time the Germans trampled over us an' the war was lost but for the South Irish. Rafferty, bein' a Quartermaster-

Sarjint, was a non-combatant, so to speak. He came up with the rations as seldom as possible, bein' a man who believed in lookin' after himself an' stayin' away from the shells. He'd no stomach for fightin', annyway. Whenever I got the chance I'd speak with him :

"Rafferty," I'd say, "are you lookin' forward to the day when I knock your head off you? The minute the war's over, the minute the Germans are beat, then, by God! there'll be another war started, between you an' me. I'll pay you for all I suffered since you told them lies to Sarjint-Major MacGinty years ago." Believe me, yer honour, or believe me not, the man faded, knowin' I'd do as I said.

By the end of nineteen-fifteen I was a full Sarjint again. I drunk no more than was good for my health. The business in hand was to win the war an' we did, by God! The South Irish it was that won the war under Colonel O'Halloran-Tracey. Yes, sir, it's the truth. I can look back now on a disappointin' life. I done nothin' I might have done. When I think of my opportunities thrown away, by God! I'm ashamed. Fellas no better than me was Officers by the second year of the war, Captains an' Majors. Me, I was never no more than an old swaddie. I failed. Nothin' went right. But I have me one great satisfaction. I was one of the seventy men that beat the German Army an' I commanded the Second Battalion, the Royal South Irish Fusiliers in the field. Listen, yer honour, I'll tell you the way it was.

At the end of March, nineteen-eighteen, if you remember, the Germans made their last big attempt to smash us. They came in droves, hundreds of thousands of picked troops, advancin' all over the old Somme battlefield like locusts across the Transvaal, an' we fought an' we fought till the Battalion numbered less than two hundred men, ready to drop from exhaustion an' hunger an' thirst an' the want of sleep, but a fightin' Battalion an' not a mob, like some of them that we met in the retreat. A fightin' Battalion, yer honour, an' all on account of Colonel O'Halloran-Tracey. A grand man he was when there was a battle in it. The grandest man ever you seen.

We gave way all the time, turnin' every few miles to fight, scroungin' whatever ammunition an' rum an' food we could lay our hands on, an' the Germans followin' on an' on, like the wild Atlantic roarin' over the strand. It was the French let us down, so they were sayin'. The reinforcements they promised was never

sent. Well, what of it? The poor fellas had troubles enough of their own, I daresay, without botherin' their heads about us. But doesn't everyone know the worst ill-feelin' in time of war comes from your friends an' not your enemies. We didn't care a tinker's damn for the Germans. We could laugh at them. We did. But when it came to our friends, that was a different pair of shoes. There was the time, for instance, the South Irish fought one of the Canadian Battalions out at rest. Yer honour, that was a grand fight. The Military Polis were in more danger than at anny other time in the war. I was a Sarjint then an' took no part in the battle till I whipped off me tunic an' went in like a private.

Well, yer honour, as I was tellin' you, things looked bad. I'm not denyin' it. We'd been goin' back, day after day, an' where would it end? An' where was the Germans comin' from? Was all them tales they was after tellin' about them bein' finished lies or what? Will they drive us into the sea at last? we said. Yer honour, the time came when we were losin' hope. There was less than two hundred of us, tired an' footsore an' heartsick, linin' the top of a steep embankment, an' the Germans no more than a mile away on the sky line, advancin' in great masses across country, an' bunches of men puttin' up a bit of a resistance here an' there—we cud see them—an' the big shells crashin' down on us. Yes, it's the truth, it was unforgettable. On every side ye could see the troops pourin' back, beaten, half-crazy for the want of sleep, hobblin', an' the great black shell bursts, an' the machine guns cracklin' in the distance, gettin' nearer an' nearer, all over that des'late landscape without a speck of green to liven your heart. An' us—us linin' the embankment, waitin' till the Germans was near enough for us to go into action once more, some of us asleep already an' all of us tired an' dispirited an' most of the officers killed, an' the shells wailin' an' screechin' like lost souls on every side of us an' the war lost.

Well, sir, I'm tellin' you. Someone said:

"What good will it do to fight anny more?" An' before you knew what was happenin' the boys was driftin' down the side of the embankment away from the Germans.

"What's all this?" ses the Colonel. You should have seen him. His uniform was all torn an' covered with mud: he hadn't shaven since God knows when: he hadn't shaven or washed or ate: he was like a man at death's door till ye seen the eyes in him, as big as saucers an' as fierce as a lion's, an' you knew you'd

be goin' a long way an' not meetin' a man that had one quarter the life in him he had.

"What's all this?" he ses. "Turn," ses he, "an' get back an' stay till I give the word to withdraw!"

The men jist looked at him an' walked by him in tens an' twenties, staggerin' like they were after drinkin' too much for their legs. The Colonel, he watched them go.

"You poor cowards!" ses he. "You're not worth a bullet between you." An' then he ses: "Mooney," he ses, "there's the two of us left an' that's all. No use stayin' here to be killed." He held out his hand. "Mooney," he ses, "you're a dam' good soldier. You must go." A shell came tearin' down on us an' burst not ten yards from where we were an' without pausin' for further discussion I shouldered me rifle an' made me way down the embankment.

I'd gone maybe a hundred yards—an' mind you, yer honour, by this time the Germans was within half a mile of us an' advancin' fast—I'd gone maybe a hundred yards when I heard a *pop-pop-pop-pop* an' I turned my head an' there I seen—I seen the Colonel wasn't with me at all. He'd stayed where he was, on top of the embankment, an' he firin' a Vickers gun at the Germans, aimin' as cool as you please. By his side was one of the South Irish little Company flags, a green tiger on a yellow field, its staff stuck in the ground. An' then I yells at the top of my voice:

"South Irish, where the hell are ye goin'? Ye dam' skulkin' cowards, turn about an' look what's happenin' behind your backs! You're runnin' away," I ses, "an' your Colonel fightin' the whole dam' German Army single-handed! Come on back an' fight."

Well, yer honour, we went back, then, by fives an' sixes an' sevens, more an' more of us, till the whole Battalion, less than two hundred men, much less by now, was linin' the embankment once more. An' the Colonel, he ses: "Good man, Sarjint Mooney, I knew I could trust you bringin' them back to me. I'm proud of you." Sure, a man would have to be made of putty not to be feelin' a glow an' him hearin' words like them!

Well, there we were on top of that embankment, an' the Germans advancin' in droves across the open. Yer honour, we stayed where we were for two hours or more, holdin' them back, till the corpses piled five foot high at the foot of the embankment was like dirty old sandbags after a winter's rain. We held them there,

by God! till there was no more than seventy of us left alive an' it dark. We went back, then, half a mile in good order, facin' around an' keepin' the enemy off with rapid fire till we made another big stand in an old farm which had been used as a dressin' station earlier an' was full of dead men.

It was night by now, yer honour, an' black as pitch. The Germans had gone on all round. We could hear the battle ragin' in our rear. Machine gun fire was makin' the farm more an' more—what is the word now that they use?—that's it, yer honour—untenable. It was impossible to hold the farm another minute an' the most of the place in flames. The German fire died down: out of the darkness someone called to us in English:

"You South Irish, you must surrender. It is no good." We saw the fella by the light of a flare, an' by damn! a bomb slap in the middle of him finished his speech. You understand, sir, the South Irish wasn't friends with the Germans at all. An' then—well, what could we do? Stay where we were! No, it wasn't possible. The Colonel, he ses: "All right, now we're goin' back. I'm warnin' you, ye'll have to fight like hell to get through. Are ye ready?"

If I live till I'm ninety, I'll never forget that charge. Seventy dead men, dead on their feet, the survivors of the Second South Irish, fightin' their way back with the bayonet through the Germans to the new defensive line that the British Army was after makin'. It was a hopeless business from beginnin' to end but we pulled it off.

We fought our way out through the farm-yard gate an' over walls an' across fields an' ditches till we come on the German Army facin' the other way, fightin' our fellas in front of them. You understand, yer honour, the strategy of the thing in all its purity? We were after takin' them in the rear. Colonel O'Halloran-Tracey shouts to us:

"Give them the South Irish yell, now! *Charge!*" An' by God! we let out the *Clear the Way*, the old Tipperary Tigers' war cry, the seventy of us, an' with our bayonets we went through that German Army as the divil went through Athlone, in standin' leps! We caught them in the rear an' stampeded the most of them an' by God!—listen to this now what I'm tellin' ye—I'm damned if the Reg'ment we were after annihilatin' didn't turn in a blind panic, the poor craytures! an' start firin' into their own men that were chasin' after us, the fellas that had been tryin' to capture the farm. An' they fought! By God! you never

heard such firin' in your life! I laughed, by God! for the first time since the attack begun days before. I laughed at the thought of them squareheads firin' into each other an' fightin' for all the world like pariah dogs in Peshawar Bazaar scrappin' over an old bone.

Well, yer honour, that's about all. We burst through them Germans yellin' the South Irish yell, by God! an' we reached a trench that a crowd of our fellas was diggin' for dear life, labour men an' cooks an' signallers an' Army Service Corps drivers an' such like. An' a fat ol' fella with a grey mustache an' a General's gold oak leaves on the peak of his cap calls out:

"Who the hell are you people? What God-forsaken crowd is that?" An' the Colonel ses:

"It's the Second Battalion, the Royal South Irish Fusiliers! What's left of them." An' the old fella ses:

"I might have known it by the noise ye were makin'. Are ye drunk or sober? Turn, annyway, an' fight."

An' that, yer honour, was the limit of the German advance. We lay down in the dark, exhausted, an' listened to the noise of the battle in front where them Germans was fightin' each other. It's God's truth I'm tellin' ye, sir. There must have been a couple of Divisions engaged knockin' hell out of each other most of the night. When they attacked at dawn, havin' discovered the mistake they were after makin', it was a half-hearted affair altogether. We beat them off easy. The German advance was checked on account of what the South Irish had done. But the Colonel had fought his last fight.

Someone fetched me to where he lay on his back by the side of a ditch with both his ankles smashed to smithereens by shrapnel. He was bad, I'm tellin' ye.

"Sarjint Mooney," he ses, "there's no officers left alive. As senior survivin' N.C.O., you'll take charge of what's left of the Battalion. You'll be goin' out of action at any minute now," ses he. "If I live, I'll recommend you for another bar to your D.C.M." Which he done, in due course.

An' then, same as he said, word came we were to be withdrawn. I got the remains of the Battalion out of the line, fifty-six strong. Fifty-six. An' me in command. An' then—now listen, yer honour, listen—we went stragglin' down the road, dead to the world, an' who should we see comin' toward us but me brave Rafferty!

"What's all this?" ses he, lookin' at the bunch of us.

"This," ses I, "this is the Second Battalion of the Royal South Irish Fusiliers, with me in command!"

"What's that?" he ses. I told him again.

"You in command!" he ses.

"Yes," ses I, "as senior N.C.O. I'm in command."

"You're not," ses he. "I'm senior to you, Sarjint Mooney. I'm takin' over command, this minute."

"Oh!" ses I. "Is that so? Well," I ses, "I'll see you damned." His face was white, for all the world like an old puff ball. "I'll see you in hell," ses I.

"Sarjint Mooney," he ses, "you've gone too far. I'll have you court-martialled for that," ses he, showin' his big ugly teeth in a grin. "I've got you at last."

I turned to the man next me an' ses:

"Here, take hold of me rifle," an' then I ses: "Quartermaster-Sarjint Rafferty, it's high time you seen some fightin'. Put up your fists. D'you hear what I say?"

"What the hell do you mean, you fool?" ses he.

"I mean this," I ses. "I'm goin' to fight you for the command of the Battalion." An' I did.

We fought there in the road, him an' me, with the battle roarin' on every side, we fought an' the fifty-six survivors of the Second South Irish stood in a circle aroun' us an' watched me knock hell out of him. Yes, sir, I give him as good a beatin' as ever a man took. All the misery an' disappointments of the past twelve years gave strength to me blows. I was near dead when I first seen him paradin' along the road toward us, full of good bully beef an' ration rum, but by damn! when I stood up to fight I was—I was a boy ag'in. I knocked him down three times an' the third time he stayed where he fell. I stood over him.

"Have you had enough, Rafferty?" He couldn't spake. He jist nodded his head. "All right," I ses. "I win. An' I keep command of the Battalion." Which I did for the next couple of hours, until the Brigade sent us an Officer to—to supersede me.

That's all, sir. If it hadn't been for the South Irish the war would be lost. I got me bar to me D.C.M. an' Colonel O'Halloran-Tracey was given the D.S.O. for conspicuous bravery in the field an' devotion to duty. Yes, yer honour, they give him the D.S.O., the same as they give the Staff Officers who didn't go near the

fightin' but was nice to the Gen'ral at mess. An' that's the way of the world, yer honour, always. It isn't the most deservin' that gits rewarded in time of war, or the bravest, or the fella that's seen the most fightin'. No, it's the man that's seen no fightin' at all, that's had the aisiest time, an' the best food, an' the laste danger. Well, that's how the South Irish won the war. That's how I commanded the Battalion, a full Sarjint. That's how I fought Rafferty.

An' now it's high time I was gettin' along. It's seven years now since I seen the Colonel. Maybe I ought to have done as he said an' left Ireland to me betters ages ago.

What's that, yer honour? Will the Colonel be glad to see me, did you say? Sure it's makin' fun of me, ye are! Didn't I tell ye? He died four days ago an' I'm on my way now to his funeral. The Regiment's gone: there'll be no firin' party, no three volleys, no band playin' the Dead March, no muffled drums, only me, Sarjint Mooney, without a pension, sober for once in my life, to march with him.

Good-bye, yer honour. What's that? For me! Well, well! An' you mean it! God bless you, yer honour! May ye never regret yer kindness to a poor old Irish soldier.'

W. TOWNEND.

A CANOE TRIP ON THE MOSELLE.

BY ARNOLD WHITRIDGE.

If you follow the windings of the Moselle, it is exactly one hundred and ninety-one kilometres from Treves to Coblenz. You can do it in a car comfortably between lunch and dinner. If you are really modern you can probably hire an aeroplane, cover the distance in half an hour, and congratulate yourself on having saved so much time. Just why anybody should want to economise time in this way is a mystery, but the people who go roaring over the map of Europe in aeroplanes are essentially miserly creatures. They hoard their time instead of lavishing it about the way an open-handed tourist should. Ask them what they enjoyed the most on their holiday and they will look at you with a wild surmise. Of course they enjoyed flying the most because it saved so much time. There seems to be a widespread idea among tourists that this peculiar form of thrift is in some way virtuous.

It took us just a week to do those one hundred and ninety-one winding kilometres. Once, with the wind behind us and on a stretch of river where the current is particularly strong, we did a kilometre in five minutes, but at that speed the river-banks race by too quickly for real enjoyment. The usual rate was six kilometres an hour, which allows time out for lighting a pipe and consulting the omniscient Mr. Baedeker. There are tourists who scorn to associate with that learned gentleman, but we like his fat red face and we never travel without him. On this trip we grew more than ever attached to him because for once we found out something that he did not know. Karl Baedeker has never heard of the canoe club of Treves. He does not know that you must lunch at the Anchor Hotel at Meserich instead of at the other more presuming *gasthaus*. The secretary of the canoe club, who is steeped in all the lore of the Moselle, told us so. From him we learned that the canoeing fraternity, i.e. the real aristocrats of the river, never pay more than five marks for bed and breakfast, because they stay with people of real discrimination who relish their society. As a rule they fight shy of towns, and put up at some rural *gaststube*. It is only the poor white trash in automobiles that patronises Baedeker's starred hotels.

This was wise advice and we followed it faithfully, except when the temptations of the flesh proved too strong and we succumbed to a bout of luxury. On the very first day of our trip we met the arch enemy, Rain. In the morning our morale was tried by a soft drizzle, which we ignored. It developed into the kind of rain that splashes when it hits you. We paddled on in silence. Were we 'muddy-mettled rascals' to be defeated by the first downpour? Yes, we were. From Treves to Berncastel the railroad skirts the river, and very convenient it is even though it may be unæsthetic. We hustled ourselves and the canoe ignominiously into the train, and an hour later we were luxuriating in as hot a bath as the Drei Könige Hotel could provide, which of course was not very hot as it had not been bespoken the night before. Napoleon was beaten by the thermometer in Russia, so why should we be ashamed of being beaten by a cloudburst on the Moselle? After all, we belong to the effete new world, and the canoe club can never realise how large a part plumbing and hot water play in our civilisation.

Even the rain had its compensations, for as we waited for our train in the dingy café at Detzem we heard for the first time a reasonably dispassionate opinion of the French occupation. Our companions in misery were a young couple from Treves who were taking their annual holiday on the river. The remorseless drizzle had discouraged them. 'Perhaps they might get away again later in the year,' we suggested. They smiled gently at our ignorance. 'Oh no, the times were too hard, it was not like the old days before the War. Everybody was poor now.' Had the French occupation anything to do with it, we enquired as delicately as possible. A cloud passed over their faces, 'wir fühlen es sehr viel.' Time had not softened the indignity of the occupation. They admitted grudgingly that the French soldiers behaved well, but they did not bring money into the country as the Americans had done. All their supplies came from France. Furthermore, the officers commandeered the best houses, and thus drove away a very desirable class of people. It all seems trivial enough when one remembers the deportations from Lille, but that as our friends pointed out was during the War when horrors were inevitable. Germany and France had been at peace now for ten years; surely it was time for the occupation to cease. Such were the arguments that we heard repeated again and again. While no one pretended that the occupation was unduly severe, everyone complained that the French

brought no business into the country. Prosperity and patriotism both demanded that they should go, and perhaps it was only natural that the voice of the prosperity-mongers should be the louder of the two.

It was hard to believe that the glorious country spreading out before us was not prosperous. On a wet afternoon in Detzem prosperity seems a long way off, but the next day the sun came out, and as we paddled away from Berncastel the vineyards rising up on either side of the river seemed to us invincible bulwarks against depression. Along the Moselle the whole population is enlisted in the service of the grape. Except for the villages, which cling to the edge of the river, the banks are entirely given over to vineyards. Sometimes where the slope is not too steep they stretch to the skyline in smooth unbroken ranks. More often they are buttressed against the rock in little wedge-shaped formations, for nature has made no concessions to the grape grower. The best grapes appear to grow in the most inaccessible places, and no ledge is too precarious for cultivation.

Fortunately the idea of pooling all interests in one giant merger has not yet penetrated to this part of the world. Eventually there will probably be one standard wine produced by the whole region, but for the present every villager has his own winepress, and every village has its own distinctive wine. At Uerzig one drinks a shaggy wine called wolf's milk. Two miles away are the famous Zeltingen vineyards, which produce a wine soft and delicate enough for Mr. Volstead himself. Some day I hope to take that gentleman on a personally conducted tour through the valley of the Moselle. There he will see thousands of temperate, self-respecting people, men, women and children, who devote all their energies, mental as well as physical, to the cultivation of the vine. Perhaps I shall be able to induce him to climb one of those perpendicular cliffs with a basket on his back, as everyone in the village does at harvest time. And I shall ask him when he comes back in the evening whether he considers this race of wine-drinkers a degenerate people. If he has the decency to hang his head in shame, I shall be merciful and fill his glass with Graach Himmelreich 1927, and I shall explain very patiently that Himmelreich means Kingdom of Heaven. Afterwards we shall turn to the story of Saul in the Bible, and when we come to that heartrending passage, 'Behold, I have erred and have played the fool exceedingly,' I shall be very much disappointed if he does not break down and cry like a child.

This is an idle dream no doubt, but as we floated down the Moselle the supreme folly of Prohibition came back to us with redoubled force. To think that there are in America thousands of otherwise intelligent people who have actually managed to convince themselves that the taste for wine is vicious! We once tried to persuade a highly intelligent landlady that such people existed, but she was so annoyed by our painstaking exposition of insanity that we soon found ourselves conversationally becalmed. An unmistakable 'the queen is not amused' expression came across her face, and we drifted as best we could into other topics.

Next to life on a canal barge, which is said to breed more philosophers than any other form of outdoor sport, a canoe trip provides the greatest stimulus to idle contemplation. Our difficulty was that the canoe was so comfortable, and the business of ticking off six kilometres an hour so deeply satisfying, that we never wanted to stop. Of course that is true of any trip. How many people have started out in an automobile determined to do only a hundred miles a day, and then decided after reaching their destination at four o'clock that they might as well go on. It is the same thing on a walking trip. You determine to start out sensibly, but the horizon always beckons, and by the end of the first day you have done twenty-five miles. The next morning you will regret your energy, but lameness cannot rob you of the thrill of accomplishment. In a canoe there is another complication. The current may be so good that you will glide by the village where you had meant to stop before you know it. That happened to us at Riol, and we are still tortured by the memory of a little hotel with gay window-boxes and a shady terrace overlooking the river where we almost stopped for lunch. Riol taught us a good lesson—when you feel an impulse to stop, obey it immediately—so when we came to Enkirch there was no discussion. We headed the canoe into a little cove, and there, following Browning exactly, we quenched its speed in the slushy sand.

Enkirch is one of those retiring villages that do not expose their full beauty to the river. It nestles against the vineyards on the hillside, leaving a strip of no-man's land at its back which is sometimes occupied by the Moselle, and sometimes by the amateur gardeners of the village. This year the river was very low and the gardeners had consequently taken full possession. The usual beans and potatoes were enlivened by standard roses and patches

of scarlet dahlias. Wherever we went in Germany we were struck by the universal love of flowers. In Enkirch especially, the houses outdo themselves in the profusion of their window-boxes. Petunias and clematis were echeloned down the street, spilling over every window-sill and every doorway. If there is anything more beautiful on the Moselle than these old half-timbered houses gaily asserting their flowery youth we must have missed it.

We have only one serious complaint against Enkirch—that we toiled up to the old church outside the village only to find it locked. That is unfortunately a common enough occurrence in Protestant countries; but on the Moselle, which is overwhelmingly Catholic, it was unexpected. Some day when the League of Nations is much more powerful than it is now, it will create a tourist's paradise, where churches are never locked and where guides encourage you to roam through state palaces at will. This fantastic country will be international in the best sense of the word. Its inn-parlours will be English, its plumbing American, the cooking French, and the cleanliness German. If you lose your passport the Government will implore you to forget about it. But alas, even then it will be uninhabitable unless the tourists who flock there are gifted with a miraculous unconsciousness of each other's existence.

Tourists are the greatest snobs in the world. They despise each other for being tourists. If you want to flatter them you must pretend to mistake them for something else. Every shopkeeper in Europe recognises an American instantaneously, but if he is wise he never lets him know it. The most vociferous hundred per cent American, once he sets foot in Europe, takes a childish delight in being addressed as one of the natives. On the Moselle our vanity was agreeably tickled. True, no German greeted us as compatriots. That would have required a flight of imagination of which they were hardly capable, but at least we had the distinction of being unique. No foreign canoe had passed that way since the War. From all over the Fatherland Germans flocked to the Moselle, but the hotel registers disclosed no trace of an *ausländer*.

The native tourists were endlessly interesting. They travelled in strange canoes made of wire and canvas, which fold up in the shape of an umbrella. Our wooden boat, hailing as it did from France, excited great curiosity. They were never tired of gazing at it and exclaiming 'ganz holz, ganz holz,' as if such a thing were the rarest phenomenon. Most of them were college boys, and very nice fellows they were, with that genius for song which seems to be

universal in Germany. The singing is one of the things that make travelling in Germany so delightful. If two people are walking down the street and have nothing to say to each other they sing. We never found out what they sang although we often joined in the chorus. At any rate it was not jazz. Eventually, Germany will succumb as other nations have done to the whine of the gramophone, but for the present the human voice still holds its own.

Perhaps the Rhine and the Moselle lend themselves naturally to song. On one memorable evening when we had reached our inn earlier than usual we followed Baedeker's advice in climbing up to the ruined castle of Ehrenburg, which as he pointedly remarks was destroyed by the French in the Thirty Years War. Just as we reached the courtyard a burst of song greeted us from a Boy Scout troop. They were on a walking trip, and their captain being a wise man made a great point of encouraging singing on the march. They only stayed long enough to drink a few bottles of pink lemonade, then they were off again swinging down the mountain. The moonlight, the ruined castle, and the singing of those boys in the distance, created an almost absurdly theatrical atmosphere. Down in the valley Ford and Edison were gradually obliterating the past, but here on the ruined battlements of Burg Ehrenburg we were back in the Middle Ages.

Baedeker advocates climbing every castle-crowned cliff along the Moselle, but we have discovered that he likes panoramas altogether too much. It is just as inspiring to look up as to look down, and with the one exception of Burg Eltz the castles in themselves are too thoroughly demolished to be interesting. Burg Eltz, however, is a glorious exception. It has been in the hands of the same family since the twelfth century. It has never been surrendered or captured or even shelled. Marshal Broglie once succeeded in dragging a train of artillery up the narrow gorge to the castle gates, but at the critical moment Louis XIV had a change of heart and Burg Eltz was left intact. What the castle is like inside we do not know for we arrived too late in the evening to be admitted. At six o'clock the gates are shut, and though we told the concierge we had come three thousand miles just to see his castle he remained adamant. 'Come back at nine o'clock to-morrow morning,' and we could see everything. It was reasonable enough, for the family were in residence and they liked a little privacy in the evening, but somehow on a trip one never can go back. We debated the question over

the *café-au-lait* the next morning, but the river was beckoning and we had to go on.

The theory that the wayfarer can do exactly as he likes is utterly false. Actually he only changes one routine for another that may be even more inexorable. Every morning the Moselle summoned us and every morning we obeyed. Sometimes we would decide to take it easy, but we were always restless if we were not away by the time the mists had cleared off. Why did we not stop at Beilstein a few hours longer? This sanctuary of the Jews, as it was in the Middle Ages, is one of the most exquisite spots on the Moselle, but after exploring the old streets and trying to sketch the façade of the hotel we had to get back to the canoe. Perhaps it was that the hotel proprietor insisted on talking feeble English to us instead of listening to our equally feeble German, or it may have been that our friends in the canoe club had warned us against the exorbitant charges of Beilstein. Whatever the reason, the Moselle won, as it always did, and we paddled on to Cochem, one stage further on the way to Coblenz.

The nearer we got to Coblenz the more impossible it became to delay. We stopped for a swim the last afternoon just to stretch the trip a little longer. The church at Alkem standing over the village like a faithful watch-dog held us for a few minutes, but the current carried us along faster than we knew, and by five o'clock the great fort of Ehrenbreitstein was staring us in the face.

Ten years ago I had been stationed at Coblenz with the army of occupation, but I cannot recall that the excitement of holding a bridgehead on the Rhine was exactly intoxicating. Now that we were paddling into Coblenz of our free will I felt as elated as a victorious general at the end of a brilliant campaign. So many trips are still-born, so many are watered down to suit the convenience of others, that when one comes off exactly as planned, you feel that every stranger you pass ought to stop and congratulate you. We stayed by the Moselle to the moment of its downfall. Under the arrogant eye of William I it plunges into the arms of the Rhine, and there we left it. The Rhine has its admirers but it is not a companionable river like the Moselle, and we had decided beforehand not to mix our waters. A trip should never be prolonged beyond its logical limits. The last canoe trip had ended at Fort Kent on the Canadian Boundary line, and we remembered being tempted to go on down the St. John River to the sea. At the hotel at Fort Kent we had been greeted as a 'couple of sports';

here in Coblenz we were '*messieurs les canotiers*,' but the note of camaraderie was the same. The fraternity of the road or the river is not easy to relinquish. Whoever your companions may be—an Indian guide in the Maine woods or a boatman on the Moselle—you establish a relationship which for the moment seems permanent. For a week or two you breathe a freer air in a country where you have no chores, no responsibilities and no obligations. Then abruptly it all comes to an end. Back you go to what Voltaire calls cultivating the garden. Sometimes the cultivation does not show for much, but without the garden, such as it is, you would never have enjoyed your escape.

'CHILDREN BY ADOPTION.'

BY B. S. TOWNROE.

ONE evening in September, 1918, over six hundred ghosts of humanity lay on the straw in a church in the Pas-de-Calais, filling both the chancel and the nave. They were French peasants, who for two years and more had been used by the German troops behind the line for labour of all kinds. With the advance of the British Army, these captives had been released from slavery and semi-starvation.

Some were only fit to survive for the rest of their lives in a mental hospital, for they were clutching at wisps of straw, and talking gibberish. There were no young women at all, for these had disappeared, and it was only possible to guess as to their fate. All the survivors were huddled together in the church, devouring the food that was supplied in plenty by British Quartermasters. The next morning these refugees were conveyed westwards so as to be well out of the way of the military preparations then being made for the further victory advance, that within two months led to the Armistice.

These peasants were typical of thousands of French men and women who lost houses, furniture, agricultural stock and implements in the devastated areas owing to the German invasion.

Few had anything left in the world, except those who had hastily concealed their hoardings of years down wells or under the ground before they were driven away into captivity, and their cottages ruined by shell fire. Nevertheless, like homing pigeons, battered about by a gale, they struggled back after the War was over to the little villages on the Somme, around Arras or in Flanders.

In every home fathers or sons or close relations had been killed. The percentage of losses, according to the population in 1914, pressed with exceptional severity upon France. The following are the figures:

1	dead or missing for	28	inhabitants in	France.
1	" " " "	35	" "	Germany.
1	" " " "	50	" "	Austria-Hungary.
1	" " " "	66	" "	Great Britain and Ireland.
1	" " " "	79	" "	Italy.
1	" " " "	107	" "	Russia.
1	" " " "	2,000	" "	America.

An American deputy thus expressed France's loss in dead. 'If the French soldiers, fallen during the War, rose from their graves and filed past before you in ranks of four abreast, at the rate of 10,500 an hour, it would take six days and five nights before the last of them had passed.'

The survivors, in many cases fatherless and widowed, crept back, often carrying all their worldly goods on a perambulator, to the site of their pre-war village, only to find the fruit trees cut down, the houses burnt out, the water polluted, the roads dynamited, and the soil poisoned by gas and torn by shells.

It may be well to recollect the official figures. Of houses, some 794,040 were destroyed and seriously damaged; of factories where more than 10 persons were employed, 3,341 were entirely destroyed; of animals, 835,000 cattle, 690,000 sheep and goats, and 375,000 horses, mules and donkeys, were missing at the end of the War.

Another illustration of the smashed condition of the Departments where the most severe fighting took place may be gathered from the fact that at the time of the Armistice in these Departments the population was a bare two million. It is now nearly five millions. This goes to show how successful have been the efforts made to repatriate the population, to rebuild the public buildings that were destroyed, to restore farms, factories, schools and cottages, to fill in over 313,000,000 cubic metres of trenches, to clear over 3,000,000 hectares of soil from the debris of barbed wire and shells.

Great Britain has played a generous part in this task of reconstruction, and possibly the extent of British help is still not sufficiently recognised either in this country or in France. It was therefore welcome news to learn that M. Doumergue, the President of the French Republic, had decided to thank personally in the year 1930, on the completion of the task of restoring the devastated areas, those British municipalities which have adopted French villages.

This year almost all of the claims for compensation for war damage, numbering 300,100,000, with the exception of a few thousand, chiefly involving legal problems, have been settled. The principal buildings, including the shattered belfry at Arras, the church at Albert with the Virgin and Child, the cathedral at Rheims, are almost rebuilt. Battlefields, with the exception of some of the most hopelessly scarred districts close to Notre Dame de Lorette and in the valley of the Ancre, are now under cultivation.

The present year, therefore, marks the conclusion of the reconstruction period. It is therefore appropriate that representatives

of over forty municipalities, a party numbering 300 at least, should go to Paris under the auspices of Lord Derby and the United Associations of Great Britain and France, in order to visit the Elysée and receive an expression of personal gratitude from the head of the French nation.

Looking back on the past ten years the magnitude of the assistance given from this country will surprise many, especially remembering the slump that took place after the first two boom years; the industrial troubles, culminating in the general strike of 1926, and the recent unemployment.

The British League of Help, so admirably served by Mr. H. A. Gwynne, the Editor of the *Morning Post*, as President of the Executive Committee, and by Mr. J. Gilmer, as Secretary, during a period of three years collected large sums. In addition, the Committee of the French War Charities Society worked successfully in the North of England under the inspiration of Mr. Henry Bronnert, and especially from Manchester to France there flowed an unending stream of help.

Figures are far too cold to do justice to the warmth of the sympathy and help given. A few actual examples will reveal far more vividly than statistics the extent of the thought and effort devoted to the task of giving personal help.

Many, for example, will remember those pathetic signboards standing on heaps of brick marked with the names 'Fonquevillers' 'Fricourt,' 'St. Leger,' or 'Hermies.'

Derby adopted Fonquevillers, the tiny hamlet occupied by the French in the summer of 1915, and later actually in the British Front Line in the first Battle of the Somme. The North Midland Division took part in the desperate fighting around this hamlet. As Derby supplied so many men in this Division and other units identified with this area, the Midland town decided to help the hamlet and rebuild the offices for the Mayor, a school, a post office and a memorial to the dead. With a touching thought for the amenities of post-war existence, an harmonium and crates of toys for the children were also sent.

Fricourt was attacked on July 1, 1916, the opening day of the Somme Battle, by the 17th Division and was occupied on the following day. Some thirty months later, the inhabitants returned to find their fields a desert of shell-holes, dug-outs, and battered trenches, their homes disappeared, and their church only marked by a heap of masonry. Ipswich sent agricultural implements to the value of

£600, to be used for the mutual benefit of both Fricourt and Bazentin, another village close by, and supplied seeds and fruit trees so as to help life to start afresh.

Doncaster showed a happy sense of humour in adopting St. Leger. This village lies about eight miles to the south of Arras, and the German positions there, part of the Hindenburg Line, were carried by the Fourth Australian and the Seventh Divisions on April 2, 1917. In the autumn of the following year there was violent fighting again in this village in the course of the British advance. Inevitably it was shattered to fragments. Doncaster provided capital so that a water supply could be installed and the Mairie, the heart of French local government, could be rebuilt. A fire engine was sent out and assistance given for the rebuilding of the school.

Hermies lies further south. This village was captured in the advance of April 9, 1917, by Australian troops, and lost during the Fifth Army retreat on March 22, 1918, only to be retaken in September of the same year. Men of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry were engaged in the violent fighting in this area, and it was therefore appropriate that Huddersfield should come to the rescue of the French villagers on their return. Yorkshire men and women have provided Hermies with a water supply at the cost of frs. 100,000 and also gave the neighbouring village of Havrincourt a gift of frs. 125,000 for public services.

Manchester decided to adopt Mézières, formerly a fortress on the Meuse, crossed by one of the main roads between Germany and France, and therefore subject to continuous German invasions. In 1521 it was besieged by the troops of the Emperor Charles V. In 1815 it was besieged by the Prussians. In 1870, a third of the town was destroyed by shell fire which lasted for twenty-eight hours and the place capitulated. It was occupied by a German garrison until France had paid the last centime of the ransom imposed on the defeated country.

In August, 1914, it was an open town, for all the ancient fortifications had been abandoned. There was no resistance to the German occupation. Mézières was the German Headquarters from October, 1914, to August, 1916, and throughout the whole War unceasing requisitions and fines were imposed upon the town. The inhabitants had to work under compulsion supervised by armed soldiers. Even children of ten years old had to work gathering fruit and vegetables to supply food for the German troops. In the autumn of 1918 all

the houses were pillaged and the clothing, bedding, and furniture taken away. This town was the last of the War victims, for it was bombarded by German Artillery from 11 a.m. on November 10, 1918, until 10.55 a.m. on the 11th. This was needless cruelty on the part of military commanders who must have known that the German Government was accepting the Armistice terms. Nevertheless, they continued to pour in shells upon the ill-fated town until within five minutes of the hour fixed for the cessation of the War.

Manchester, under the leadership of the then Lord Mayor, Alderman T. Fox, sent out gifts to Mézières to the value of many thousands of pounds. Lord Derby helped with the appeal and touched the imagination of Lancastrians when he said that the devastated areas of France were equal in area to the whole of Lancashire, Yorkshire, Cheshire and parts of Staffordshire combined.

Not only were gifts poured into Mézières from Lancashire, but children were brought over from towns that had been in German occupation and were given six weeks' holiday in such resorts as Blackpool, Southport and Harrogate. All the children gained in weight and many wept bitterly after bidding farewell to their hosts and hostesses, declaring that they would much rather stay on in England than go home.

Space will not permit to describe all the gifts and varied help rendered by each British town, from Inverness in Scotland, which adopted Hulluch, to the Isle of Wight, which adopted Monchy-le-Preux, near Arras. Certain gifts are, however, worthy of special remembrance. The City of London adopted Verdun, the citizens of which are now very proud of the 'Parc de Londres.' Londoners too gave funds for the help of war orphans, provided a water supply, created a surgical department and sent out an English fire-engine. Sir William Waterlow, the present Lord Mayor of London, is to see how this generosity has been appreciated during his visit to Verdun this year.

Birmingham, among other gifts to Albert, has constructed an almshouse for needy and aged folk called the 'Pavillon de Birmingham.' Canterbury, the centre of the Garden of England, sent, together with other presents, 400 fruit trees to Lesbœufs and Morval. The College and town of Eton provided upwards of frs. 100,000 for the reconstruction of the Mairie and the Schools at Eton, not far from Verdun. Newcastle erected workmen's dwellings at Arras and provided an X-ray apparatus for the hospital of St. John. A happy thought from Newcastle was the gift of 150 homing pigeons

that were greatly appreciated by the French pigeon lovers in the Pas-de-Calais. Hornsey despatched ten Yorkshire pigs and various other gifts to Guilleumont.

Kensington was most generous to Souchez, providing land, clothing, surgical instruments, a clock, and incidentally a typewriting machine for the Mayor.

Conditions have entirely changed since these practical proofs of Great Britain's affection and sympathy with France were sent, but it is surely useful that they should not be forgotten. The replies of the various French Mayors on hearing that they were to have an opportunity in 1930 to welcome their benefactors, show how lasting is their gratitude.

The proceedings in France this year will mark the final forging of this particular link in the friendship between the two countries. Our 'children by adoption' will show by the warmth of their welcome the depth of their feelings. British admiration for the character of those whom they have been glad to help has received no more appropriate expression than in the lines written by Mr. Kipling and dedicated to France in 1913:

'Broke to every known mischance, lifted over all
By the light sane joy of life, the buckler of the Gaul;
Furious in luxury, merciless in toil,
Terrible with strength that draws from her tireless soil.'

Those who visit the reconstructed towns and villages, Verdun, Peronne, Albert, Arras and all the scattered hamlets in the former war area, will be greeted by men and women who have suffered anguish beyond description, who have customs and ways dissimilar to those of the English countryside, but who possess the patience, industry and indomitable courage to which all lovers of France pay humble tribute.

To the Editor of the CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

DEAR SIR,—

My friend Mr. Luigi Villari has pointed out in courteous terms the serious error of fact which I admitted into my article in your March number when I stated that the phrase *senza aiuto*, 'without assistance,' stood in that *communiqué* of General Diaz which has been engraved in the passage between St. Mark's and the Doge's Palace at Venice, and, for that matter, in very many towns of Italy. The phrase does not occur there, as I now realize, or in any of the official *communiqués* of that time, and my memory has played me a curious trick in assigning so authoritative a source for a phrase merely passed from mouth to mouth. I could have made my point differently, but quite as effectively, if I had quoted from a later document, the speech delivered by General Cadorna himself to the Seventh Congress of *Combattenti* at Lucca on the 15th of June, 1925. I find there the following sentences :

'Continue ad amare la nostra bella Italia, perchè diventi grande e prosperosa. *Essa sola* ha vinto sul Piave la grande guerra; *essa sola* ha respinto in tante battaglie il secolare nemico, e dico *essa sola*, perchè sul Piave non vi erano gli alleati. Vi era il solo Fante italiano.'

The date of this speech shows that the reference is less to the vital stand in October, 1917, when the Allies were forming in support behind the Italians on the Piave, than to that made in *June*, 1918, when the Allies were on the Asiago Plateau—save for the very important intervention of the British aeroplanes; and the victorious rôle of the British and French in *attacking* across the Piave in October, 1918, is altogether ignored. It is permissible also to point out that General Diaz's final *communiqué* above mentioned leads its readers to suppose that the military effort in October, 1918, was in the proportion of 51 : 3 : 2 as between Italians, British and French, and that the 'Tenth Army' under Lord Cavan's command, mentioned last but one among the Armies, merely took part in the *gigantesca battaglia* with the rest.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

O. L. RICHMOND.

April, 1930.

LITERARY ACROSTICS.

A LITERARY Acrostic is published every month, and the Editor of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE offers two prizes to the most successful solvers. The winners will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. If several solvers send solutions of equal merit, the two whose answers are opened first will win the prizes.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 82.

'A noise like of a hidden brook
In the ——— of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.'

1. 'The purest treasure mortal times afford
Is spotless reputation; that away,
Men are but gilded ——— or painted clay.'
2. 'She is walking in the meadow,
And the woodland ——— rings.'
3. 'Let not ——— mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.'
4. 'To hear the lark begin his ———,
And singing startle the dull night.'
5. 'Crabbed age and ——— cannot live together:
—— is full of pleasance, age is full of care.'

RULES.

1. Only one answer may be sent to each light.
2. Every correct light and upright will score one point.
3. With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed on page X of 'Book Notes' in the preliminary pages of this issue; and he must be careful to give also his real name and address.
4. Solvers should not write either the quotations or the references on the same paper as their answers. It is not necessary, or even desirable, to send them at all.
5. Solvers who write a second letter, to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.
6. Answers to Acrostic No. 82 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50 Albemarle Street, London, W.1, and must arrive not later than June 20. No answers will be opened before this date.

ANSWER TO NO. 81.

1. C	eli	A
2. A	utum	N
3. E	as	T
4. S	apph	O
5. A	fternoo	N
6. R	evelr	Y

PROEM: Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*,
iii, 2.

LIGHTS:

1. Ben Jonson, *The Forest*. 9. To *Celia*.
2. Shelley, *Ariel* to *Miranda*.
3. Wordsworth, *On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic*.
4. Byron, *Don Juan*, iii, 86.
5. Tennyson, *The Lotos-Eaters*.
6. Campbell, *Hohenlinden*.

Acrostic No. 80 ('Young Dream'): This was found by most competitors to be an easy problem, though three of the first four answers opened proved incorrect. The prizes are won by Mr. W. A. Quayle, 3 The Lawn, Budleigh Salterton, Devon, and Mr. J. S. N. Roche, Kincora, Lyme Regis, Dorset. These two solvers will choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue.

'LITERARY ACROSTICS': A new series is now published, and solvers with literary tastes may be interested to hear of it. The acrostics are, like those in THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, based entirely on quotations from good authors; there are six of them, of all degrees of difficulty: in the last series no competitor answered all of them correctly. About four months are allowed for their solution. Prizes to the value of £8 are offered.

The price is half a crown; and a copy of one of the recent issues will be sent free to anyone interested. Address: A.E., The Gables, Twyford, Winchester, Hants.

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